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POEMS  
AND  
SKETCHES OF REAL LIFE  
ON THE  
LLANO ESTACADO.

BY  
ALONZO H. PERRY.



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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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The following Poems and Sketches are offered to the public with no apology. They were written for my friends, who would take none; to others I owe none. They were written during the few weeks of an indisposition that incapacitated me for the active duties of life, and under circumstances peculiarly unfriendly to composition. But if the perusal of this little volume shall afford any gratification to the indulgent reader who can kindly overlook its faults, I shall be amply repaid. The style is my own. I have witnessed most of the scenes I have attempted to describe, and have given my own impressions in my own way.

THE AUTHOR.

HUNTER'S VALLEY, TEXAS, March 19, 1880.

## PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

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ALONZO H. PERRY was born in Lafayette, Walker County, Georgia, Oct. 13, 1837, and drew his blood from some of Georgia's best strains, and though death deprived him of a father's guiding counsel in infancy, yet he had the unblemished characters of a long line of worthy ancestors to emulate, while a proud mother pointed the path of virtue and counseled him to set his mark high. He began active life when quite young, as teacher in eastern Texas, and for eight or nine years he labored faithfully and efficiently in the cause of education, winning golden opinions from his patrons and the life-long esteem of his pupils. Then nearly as much of his life was devoted to surveying for the United States Government the wild lands north of the 37th parallel and west of the Neosho river, and there, under the burning suns of summer and amidst the biting snows of winter, he won a high reputation as an exact and scientific surveyor. His health becoming impaired, he returned to Texas, the land of his

adoption, but soon his love of adventure and untamed, restless spirit led him for two years to cast his lot on the Staked Plains. where, with all the wild daring and crafty shrewdness of the taciturn red man, he added the scientific skill with the bearing and cultivated intelligence of a gentleman. Here was realized those scenes in his life he so vividly describes.

As a writer, Mr. Perry has the happy faculty of painting in freshest colors before his readers the beauties of his own vivid imagery, with a flow of language that charms while it instructs. With a sway of his pen he leads the mind to the most exalted thoughts, and plays with them as with things familiar, while the commonplace things of life he describes with all the ease, grace and facility of a Dickens. Almost without an effort he indites a poem that loses none of its lustre by comparison with some of the happiest flights of a Byron or a Moore; and whether writing prose or verse, he throws unconsciously the glamour of his own brilliant intellect over the scene and entrances the reader with its beauties. A bold and original thinker, he gives us his originalities in a kindly spirit and leads us through the wildest scenes with a kind, reliant hand. He touches every chord of the heart like the master musician the keys of his

instrument. and we predict that he will, as he should, rank high in fame as a writer, and appropriately be termed the Byron of America. He has won distinction in all his undertakings, and the stalwart hunter of the western wllds honored him alike for his bravery, goodness of heart, prowess and skill.

THE PUBLISHER.

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## DYING FOR WATER.

THE COMANCHE had gathered his dusky forces, and from the high caverns of the "Yellow Houses" that lay beneath the battlements of his fathers might now be heard the wild, weird notes of his war-song. He had converted the antres of the cougar and desert lion into the most impregnable fortress; for across the mouths of some half dozen of these, that yawned along the top of the bluff overlooking the valley of Yellow House lake he had built walls of stone. He had rode here for reasons known to himself from his hiding places in the arid sand hills, where naught but the wolf, the antelope and the Indian can live. He lay here and rested his ponies and matured his plans in security, seventy leagues from the roar of Griffin's heaviest guns and far beyond the reach of her swiftest cavalry.

But while these grim, staunch, steel-nerved warriors of the desert were lying there in apparent indolence, drinking the pure waters of the spring below them, watching the Mexican trail and husbanding their vitality against the terrible strain to come, they were eliminating a plan with "deeper skill in war's black art" than learned military tacti-

cians possess. And when the moon grew broad enough and bright enough they mounted their ponies and rode across the forty miles of level that lay between the Yellow Houses and Head Waters. Then they swept down the canon-like valley of the Double Mountain Fork and on to the settlements around Griffin, and when settlers and hunters and soldiers slept they glided swiftly and noiselessly from point to point in the haze of the moonlight and selected the fleetest and best horses.

Silently, skillfully and quickly the work was done, and long before morning's silver began to rime the east they were riding far out and swiftly toward the illimitable plains. Then the sentinel rubbed his stiffened eyelids and peered through the gray morning's uncertain light for horses that were not to be seen.

Quickly spread the alarm, and amidst the excitement, the hasty breakfast, the running hither and thither, a company of soldiers and hunters got ready for the pursuit; and accompanied by a few Lipans and Tonkawas for guides, there set out one of the most ill-fated parties that ever followed the crafty red man.

With wonderful tact or intuition the keen Tonkawa follows the dim trail where the flying horse



has left no mark on the rocks or encrusted turf that a white man would see. And straight toward the parched and desolate sand hills, avoiding every lake or spring of water, led the ominous trail.

Soon the little remaining water in the canteens began to be more carefully husbanded; but they felt that the pursued party must have water as well as themselves, and hopefully they followed on.

But the strange, dusk Indian was carrying out with most consummate skill a plan not dreamed of by the brave and fair-minded soldier or the shrewd and tireless hunter. For where his trail reached a point opposite the unseen spring or pool he halted his horses and the moccasined feet of the warriors that brought water for man and beast left no trace on the matted mesquit. This was repeated as occasion required while the thirsty soldiers and hunters pressed on after these untiring riders, unconscious of the many life-giving pools they passed so near; and when far beyond Double Lake (which they had so strangely missed) the shrewd thieves of the desert had separated and struck out singly across the barren solitude.

No water yet! The chase was done. With parched and swollen tongues and dizzy and reeling brain—almost frantic with thirst—they halted.

Command was no more, for the dry and swollen tongue of their plucky officer could not syllable a sound. The soldiers struck out east and south, and the hunters under that wonderful Mexican guide went in search of the Yellow Houses.

A midsummer burning sun scorched with merciless rays the dry desert turf, and the hot winds of the Llanos was drinking the moisture of the body. Some of the soldiers wandered to a lake, and wallowing like swine in the black muck of the bottom, they slaked their thirst in its warm waters. But I have seen<sup>1</sup> one of two carbines that was picked up, long after, beside the whitened bones of two soldiers that gave their lives to the desert drouth within half a mile of Negro Lake.

The hunters followed faithfully their dark guide, who kept his way straight as flies the dove; for he had said in the Indian's short, sententious style: "Me find Yellow House." But they could no longer bear the fierce heat of the noonday sun, and they halted and made such awnings as they could of their saddle blankets. They killed a horse and drank his blood, and then an antelope and sucked the fluids from his warm body. And when the brazen sun had sunk behind the low sand hills, and the cool night zephyrs began to fan the heated

desert, they mounted their reeling steeds and silently dropped in single file behind their guide. About two hours before daylight their guide reined his horse and said: "Yellow House close. Wait here. Might miss in dark. Me find when sun shines." And he did. For while the exhausted hunters were lying on the ground, dreaming of limpid lakes or burning sands, he was bringing them canteens of water from the cool springs of the Yellow Houses, and they wet the tongues that had been parched for eighty-six hours. I have since seen and talked with three of these hunters, whose sound lungs and toughened muscles enabled them to survive this terrible strain on the powers of life, and had from their lips the facts that were graven in characters of fire on their hearts.

## THE DESERT TRAIL.

And there was mounting in hot haste the steed,  
The mustering squadron and the clattering car.

BYRON.

[Inclined as I am to believe that "truth is stranger than fiction," the following is nearly a literal text of the facts as I had them from some of the actual participants, and in rehearsing the "o'er true tale" I have endeavored to rein the flights of the Muse within the limits of truth. I may add that the name of "Bill" has often been adopted by outlaws of the frontier, and I have called the guide "Cornello," for the reasons that the name is both metrical and Mexican and the real name unknown.]

I was a wanderer on the Range

Where stretch the Llanos bleak and vast.

And many a scene as weird and strange

Before my vision there has passed

As Arab tale, or Moorish song,

Or Spain's traditions ever told.

Of many a dark and dastard wrong

By roaming outlaws free and bold.

Nevada's eastern brow looks o'er

A desert curst by heaven.

Where mongrel clans forever pour.

By fate or vengeance driven :

And many a red, unannaed crime  
Has nursed the Indian's hate  
Within that dreary desert's clime,  
Whose fiends forever wait.  
And here the dust of nation's dead  
Still thirsty drinks the gore.  
And here and there the grinning head  
Still tells the tale of yore.  
I've listened to the hollow dirge  
The wind sang through its ghastly jaw,  
And tried to catch the spirit words  
That moaned along the flaw.  
As conch shell snatched from out the sea  
Still breathes the ocean's roar.  
This told a startling tale to me  
Of death's all blasting power.  
To me it was an echo deep  
That told of murder's blighting hand—  
A deathless wail that would not sleep  
By desert zephyrs ever fanned.  
I've stood within the noisome cave.  
Oft the home of reveling rout,  
In turn has sheltered dusky brave  
Or hiding been of crafty scout.  
And on these walls the scalp and shield  
Have dangled side by side

With many a trophy of the field  
That pleased his vaunting pride.  
I've gazed along the azure sky  
And seen hung o'er the glitt'ring earth  
The strange fantastic mirage lie.  
A phantom form of airy birth.  
I've seen the tall and grassy mound  
Plain, resting in the sky  
Above the flat and solid ground.  
Before my wandering eye.  
I've listened to the thrilling tales  
Of hunter and of scout.  
When rocky bluffs and cedar vales  
Rang with the bloody rout.  
Mathias told to me a tale,  
When lying deeply in the vale  
'Neath my robe pavillion by the stream  
That now was drank by summer's beam.  
Though dry and glistening now the bed,  
'Neath canon's wall so deeply laid,  
The upheaved drifts along its course  
Proves here has been the torrent's force.  
And these high walls through many an age  
Have overhung the torrent's rage,  
Save jagged boulders here that lie,  
Torn by artillery of the sky,

From brow of that grey battlement,  
Have tumbled here in long descent,  
With thunder's force and torrents driven,  
When poured the rain in floods from heaven.  
There leaped along the turbid wave,  
From tangled gorge and mountain cave,  
And many a ribbon-like cascade  
Leaped through the rents the lightnings made,  
And sang and hummed with many a whirl,  
With half its waters dashed to pearl,  
To meet below the mightier tide  
That rolled the boulder's weight aside.  
While lying there and thinking o'er  
The scenes that I had passed before,  
I saw a jaguar, long and tall,  
Creep 'long the verge of canon's wall;  
And then he stopped, and listening stood,  
While plain against the moon I viewed  
His mighty breast and giant limb  
In sharp outline on rocky rim.  
But for a moment only stood  
This monarch of the desert brood;  
He turned his lion head askance,  
And full on us his lightning glance  
From glaring eye all flashing fell,  
And then rang out his piercing yell,

And while its echoes rang around  
He leaped beyond my vision's bound.  
And wall to wall replied again  
In tenor of that savage strain,  
As down the canon deeply walled  
The grating echoes slowly rolled.  
I felt the owlet's flapping wing.  
I heard the wolf lap at the spring.  
I heard the bison's heavy tramp.  
The antelope's impatient stamp.  
And saw the slight and agile fox  
Leap lightly 'mong the jagged rocks:  
For when the day begins to wane  
They gather from the stretching plain.  
And trooping with its darkling shade  
They seek the deep spring in the glade.  
I lay and glanced along the past.  
And saw its fading visions vast  
One by one before me pass.  
Outlined upon that mental glass  
Kaleidoscope of the human breast,  
Alike the scenes that curst or blest  
My youth or manhood's fleeting way,  
Each in its dim and distant day.  
Reader! be thine ever bright  
As cloudless day and starry night.



So thickly did the memories creep  
Before my eye I could not sleep,  
And turning to him on my side :  
“Mathias, tell me of that ride.”  
It shocked him with electric thrill.  
But summoned soon his iron will  
He gazed aloft, and calmer now  
He ran his hand along his brow.  
As if to check the blighting blast  
Of burning memories crowding fast  
That shot athwart his quivering brain  
When glancing o’er that ride again.  
I gazed upon his noble brow,  
And saw the passions come and go :  
It seemed within his large black eye.  
As upturned there against the sky.  
That I could see impressed in pain  
The horrors of that ride again.  
And then he told in language trite  
The tale I have essayed to write.  
And as the vivid visions passed  
Before my eye he little guessed  
That I would pen in running verse  
The tale he told so brief and terse.  
I felt the glow. Heaven guard the hour  
When I shall feel the Muse’s power ;

When she shall glance my pen along  
The living lines of epic song.  
Had I a pen from eagle's wing—  
Could the charmed verse like Orpheus sing—  
I'd spurn the musty Orient's best  
And lay my scenes along the West.  
The West! the West! the glorious West!  
Where Nature's form is ever dressed  
In all the gay and gorgeous dyes  
That spring beneath her brilliant skies.  
But to his tale. 'Twas not so long  
As now may seem my careless song;  
I had it from the guileless tongue  
Of him whom every truth had wrung.  
The Comanche called his bravest, best,  
From 'mong these dark marauders of the West,  
And 'round the Hundred Wells the council sate  
And talked of vengeance and of hate,  
Beside the scant infiltr'ing tide  
The yellow sand just serves to hide,  
In midst of dried and parching land  
Where scantest shrub shades not the sand,  
Nor swag nor swale nor greener grot  
Nor lingering dew drop marks the spot.  
Though scarce an arm's length there below  
The cool and crystal waters flow.

The scalping knife or muscle shell  
Supplies his need to dig the well,  
And when his selfish want's supplied  
He turns the scanty vein to hide,  
And ere resumed the ready rein  
The drying sand has filled again,  
And skillful hid as cherished cache  
No foe will see its waters flash.  
And surely no tradition tells  
By whom was found the Hundred Wells:  
Whom Fate or Fortune strangely led  
To scoop just here the shallow bed.  
May not a finger from on high  
Sometimes direct the Indian's eye?  
Or heed his want? or guard his fall?  
The love that's large enough for all.  
The desert beasts have gathered there.  
Yet circling timidly afar  
They turn and gaze, then sidling trot  
Beyond the reach of carbine shot.  
They've sniffed the waters on the air.  
And wolf and cougar's left the lair.  
And desert lion and cayote  
Have stalked from fastness not remote.  
The antelope, with head on high,  
Watches there with wondering eye,

And know that they who followed first  
Would fainting die of burning thirst.  
And there, among these hills of sand,  
Select by lot the willing band.  
Save he shall lead whose sunburnt brow  
(Though near as dusk as Indian's now)  
Proclaims him of a gentler race :  
Yet every lineament of that face—  
The scowling eye and lowring brow—  
The heavy jaw and forehead low—  
Proclaim too well the soul within  
Brooks many a dark and damning sin :  
But such his spirit, well maintained,  
The Indian's trust and faith had gained ;  
And able with their best to cope,  
To poise the lance or throw the rope,  
Or send the arrow far and true,  
Or aught that Indian prides to do :  
Can long as any Indian ride  
Upon his flying courser's side.  
And hanging there will show a small  
And flying mark for foeman's ball :  
Or long as wolf can wait for food,  
Or eat it in its uncooked blood.  
His bed has been for years the earth,  
With robe or blanket for his berth.

He heeds not heaven's fiercest storm,  
Too well she knit to mar the form.  
Though to every crime and passion lent,  
It bears thus much, and still unbent.  
No music ever charms his ear :  
The yell of hate, or wail of fear.  
Accustomed sounds, have often smote  
Like wolf or cougar's lengthened note,  
Unheeded strike his callous ear.  
Unknown to love, and dead to fear.  
And such the spirit now that guides  
Where swift and demon-like he rides.  
The dusky band that follows where  
His counsel points to do or dare.  
And fast along the Desert Trail.  
In midnight's soft and cooling gale,  
In long and winding single file,  
Like monstrous snake of southern isle,  
And silent all the shadowed clans  
Like eastern fables genii bands,  
Sent on some mission of the fates  
To weave with woe man's life estates.  
But when the morning sun shall rise,  
And redly glow the orient skies.  
He'll seek the shades of darkest glen,  
Secure from sight of civil men :

Or leapt along the canon's edge,  
Where the deep abyss' crumbling ledge  
Cracked and rolled beneath his feet;  
And yet he glibly flew 'as fleet  
As chamois wild or mountain roe  
When seen the hunter's threatened blow:  
Has charged the shaggy bison o'er  
Where his countless thousands thundering pour  
Adown the craggy, beetling steep,  
With many a far and flying leap;  
Has often, in such daring ride,  
Replucked the arrow from his side,  
Or, with the athlete's agile knack,  
Has leaped upon his rolling back!  
But none of all that dusky band  
Had keener eye or readier hand  
Than Bill, the Texas renegade,  
Whose crimes of blood and theft had made  
A terror to the wild frontier:  
And many a wail and pleading tear  
His crimes had wrung from captive fair,  
In the heart's wild tremor of despair,  
For murdered parent lightly slain  
By this red pirate of the plain,  
Or captive child taken afar  
To learn the ways of guile and war.

No keener slave in hands of fate  
To sate the Indian's burning hate ;  
No darker crimes more reckless driven  
Than he whom laws of man or heaven  
Have outlawed.  Curst by his kind,  
That stinging viper of the mind.  
Vengeance, brings to nerve the arm  
And sternly work the ways of harm.  
And he in that dark council set,  
And never can my ear forget.  
While lying low in tallest grass  
I heard the fiendish council pass  
Too gladly on the plan he laid—  
It suits so well the Indian's trade.  
Sententious came the assenting grunt,  
As eager for the desperate hunt  
The warriors crowd to shake the hand  
That strikes against its native land.  
The plan was this, so darkly laid,  
In scales of vengeance rightly weighed :  
That while the broad'ning moon's pale light  
Still vanished half the shades of night.  
They'd Griffin's fleetest horses take  
And near to desert spring or lake,  
But out of sight would lay the course,  
And far would ride on fleetest horse,

And know that they who followed first  
Would fainting die of burning thirst.  
And there, among these hills of sand,  
Select by lot the willing band.  
Save he shall lead whose sunburnt brow  
(Though near as dusk as Indian's now)  
Proclaims him of a gentler race :  
Yet every lineament of that face—  
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Sent on some mission of the fates  
To weave with woe man's life estates.  
But when the morning sun shall rise,  
And redly glow the orient skies,  
He'll seek the shades of darkest glen,  
Secure from sight of civil men :

And here unseen he will alight,  
And lie till shades of dummer night  
Shall turn all rovers' eyes away  
From path he dares not in the day,  
And then his ride's resumed again  
With slackened girth and tightened rein:  
And thus unrecked, and all unseen,  
He speeds to where the lawns of green  
Spread in the moonlight far and wide,  
Where Clear Fork rolls his scanty tide.  
And pauses not till Griffin's steep  
Marks where the soldier wrapt in sleep  
Heeds not the hush'd, swift gliding band.  
That move to where his horses stand.  
And when the sable sentinel  
Nods at the post, not watched too well,  
Hears not beneath the corral wall  
The steps that light as shadows fall,  
Nor lists the drop of outer bar  
That lets his horses fly afar.  
And when grey morning streaks the skies  
He vainly rubs his stiffened eyes  
And peers around for missing steed  
Was once his care to rub and feed,  
For far out on the plain—away  
He fleetly flies from rising day.

His leach-like rider won't forbear  
To test his utmost bottom there,  
And ere the soldier breaks his rest  
Is flying far—and farther west.  
But now the drummer's loud reveille  
Breaks on his ear in startling peal,  
And bugle blast and note of fife  
Unwelcome, call him back to life.  
And accent wild, and hurried tread,  
And loud command in anger said,  
Proclaim too well the Indian's been  
Late on that wild, excited scene.  
And soon dispatched the short repast—  
For aught they know it is the last—  
For soldier's blood is running high,  
And vengeance asks to do or die.  
But there is mingled in that crowd  
A hunter band, with spirits proud,  
And tougher limbs, and eyes as keen  
As ever glanced along the green,  
And abler for such chase to-day  
Than they who take the Nation's pay,  
And often in the desert raid  
His hand has well the Indian stayed.  
I've known him long and well; I ween  
No soldier's gun will cut as clean

A path where Indian stands before,  
But doomed to wallow in his gore.  
But skillful Tonk and trained Lipan  
Must ride before that anxious van,  
And lead the way where flying steed  
Has crushed the turf or bent the reed.  
Note slightest trace or faintest mark  
Struck there by robber in the dark ;  
And where the ledge spreads o'er the way  
Would duller guide uncertain stay,  
The upturned spawl or slightest scratch  
His trained and practiced eye will catch,  
And fast upon the Desert Trail  
He flies with speed of mountain gale  
When driving the black storm cloud o'er  
Before its waste of waters pour  
Adown the beetling hills in wrath  
It follows fast the lightning's path,  
And sweeps the valleys far and wide  
Before its foaming, mounting tide.  
His eye shall sweep the desert far,  
And untiring lead the sons of war ;  
And that black eye of eagle look  
Its flashes from the lightning took,  
When wandering far to catch the prize  
That greets not now his searching eyes.

And on and on, and swiftly on,  
The flying robbers far had gone.  
They follow through that eager day,  
But find no water on the way.  
The water gone from each canteen,  
No limpid lake's inviting sheen,  
No crystal spring is spouting here,  
But all is parched, arid, drear.  
"But we can do as long as they,  
And sure before another day  
This trail will lead to water, where  
We'll bag the heathen in his lair."  
So argued they, and never guessed  
The trick the wary Indian pressed;  
For he, the son of craft and guile,  
Had made a pleasant ride the while.  
But two more burning days must run  
Beneath the summer's brazen sun  
Before the spirit proud will yield  
To fiery doom that fate has sealed,  
Or sink to Nature, strike to foe,  
Or faint beneath such tides of woe;  
So much of sternness nature's given  
To those whom fate or fortune's driven  
To live where blows the desert blast;  
But soon or late must feel at last,

How few the joys, and dearly bought,  
Grants the forbidding land he sought.  
But proudly on the robber rides—  
No deadly ill his way betides ;  
He had not felt the pangs of thirst.  
Of ills that latest kill the worst.  
The swollen tongue and heated brain.  
While every pulse brings hot again  
The heated blood, that mounting high,  
Rolls wild and wide his bloodshot eye.  
And gasping comes the heated breath,  
'Then that strange harbinger of death,  
Delirium, seizes on the brain,  
And wild and weird his fancies reign.  
Till death shall kindly steal away  
The spirit from its heated clay.  
Ah ! near a lake my eyes have seen.  
Forgotten now, lay the carbine,  
Choked with sand and eat with rust,  
But still beside the soldier's dust !  
And long his whitening bones will lie  
A warning to the passer by.  
That bony finger seems to mark,  
And still the accents here—but hark !  
They tell a tale thy blood will boil,  
And make thy sick'ning thoughts recoil !

Then haste away, and bear in mind  
'Tis not for thee nor thy kind  
To live upon the deserts drear ;  
God never fixed thy dwelling here.  
But how fared the fleeing robber clan ?  
Is he not something more than man,  
Who for days and nights unwearied stride  
The horse that bears such lengthened ride ?  
How long can wait the cooling drink ?  
Why not his flagging spirits sink ?  
Child of the East, thou hast yet to learn  
The counsels of the desert-born.  
Go learn his spirit : it will teach  
How far the arm of hate can reach—  
How keen the sleuth-hounds vengeance lends  
When that red savage seeks amends.  
When following there thy bloodshot eye  
Saw not the lake he led thee nigh,  
Nor reck'd the dark and deadly game  
That wrapped thy blood in fever's flame.  
Yet led he where the unseen beach  
Lay still within thy easy reach.  
He knew the lakelet, lying low,  
Would be unseen by soldier foe.  
His horses reined upon the trail,  
He seeks afoot the hidden swale,

And slaked his thirst, resumes the rein  
And way, across the trackless plain.  
His buckskin'd foot has left no trace  
To mark for foe his watering place ;  
His trail, unbroken, shows not where  
The longed-for water lies so near.  
And this repeats he oft again ;  
He knows like garden walk the plain,  
And every lake and spring can find,  
All mapped on tablet of his mind.  
And who has heard of Indian lost ?  
The desert oft his youth has crossed,  
Has hunted all its wildness o'er,  
From Phantom Hill to Pecos' Moor.  
It is his home, his natal land,  
Where ceaseless winds have ever fanned  
The heated desert's parching face—  
'Tis there he finds his dwelling place.  
Though thousand years of wind and sun  
Have baked the desert bleak and dun,  
Where hardly can the antelope  
Subsist upon its arid slope ;  
Where hungry wolf seeks famished hare  
And starves the cougar in his lair :  
Where lean and light the desert hawk  
Heeds not the raven's fainting croak.



There nature closed her giving hand,  
And frowned upon the accursed land ;  
Yet there he baffles hunger's death  
And battles for the warrior's wreath.  
'Twas far beyond deep Double Lake  
The dark Cornello sternly spake,  
And facing round, he drew the rein  
And warned the soldier, once again,  
To leave the fatal Desert Trail  
Before his wasting strength should fail,  
But bear his pangs another day,  
When he would guide and lead the way  
To where the Yellow Houses fling  
Their cooling shadows o'er the spring ;  
And drawing near that faithful guide,  
They hear his accents softly glide ;  
For his the only tongue but cleaves  
To swollen lip ; the thought it leaves  
Unsaid, the accents will not come—  
Protracted thirst has made them dumb.  
And listening here the hunters stand,  
They meet his eye and press his hand :  
The soldier seeks another route.  
And waves farewell to dusky scout.  
And some there lived the tale to tell ;  
But briefly told, remembered well,

Its burning mem'ry bright impress'd,  
More livid there than tongue confessed.  
And they who now impart the tale—  
The few whose life streams did not fail  
While throbbed the brow and burned the blood—  
The few whose frames had all withstood---  
Were men of strongest limb and lung.  
Whom fell disease had never wrung ;  
Who on the shores of Negro Lake  
Revived the chords that would not break.  
And straight as carrier-pigeon goes  
From trusted friend to warn of foes,  
The keen Cornello mark'd the way  
To where the Yellow Houses lay.  
High rolls the broad and brazen sun,  
His heating course to zenith run,  
And pours his beams all hot and clear  
O'er forty miles of desert drear,  
Whose parching dryness bars the way  
To where the cooling waters lay :  
And they are faint, and swims the brain,  
And whirling now seems glist'ning plain,  
Like ocean tides beneath the feet,  
Uncertain where the land to greet :  
Uncertain stares the wandering eye,  
Unseen the way, how far or nigh.

And now Cornello turns again,  
And mild his eye and kind his mien,  
And notes how low the vital tide  
Has ebb'd in that unequalled ride.  
Born on dry Chihuahua's plain,  
His blood was drawn from Aztec strain ;  
His line of sires had more withstood,  
With firmer eye and cooler blood,  
Than Arab on Sahara's waste,  
Before that hardier vein had passed  
Beneath the bilious Spaniard's rule.  
And yet from that degenerate school,  
Uncrushed and wild, there sprung a race  
That fearless ride the desert's face  
As eagle in his high career  
When sweeping on the spotted deer.  
And proud as high Castilian stood,  
Cornello of his Aztec blood ;  
He, a true scion of the band  
That never wept a conquered land.  
He quit the saddle, lightly stept,  
Moist now the eye that never wept,  
Though it had looked on scenes of death  
And met the lightning teeth to teeth ;  
Had seen the war cloud redly pour,  
With musket's flash and cannon's roar

Had seen the brave all redly laid  
Where fainting wounded moaned for aid.  
All had not wrought upon that eye  
Like gasping hunters there who lie.  
The strong and true, so lowly laid,  
And he must quick prepare a shade  
And stay that fever's swelling tide.  
But first he kneels by hunter's side  
And feels the pulse, so languid now :  
And gazing on that burning brow,  
He notes how faintly flick'ring there  
The spirit waits to mount in air ;  
How darkly fall Death's shadows near.  
And shakes his threatening sickle here.  
And here two thorny cactus stand—  
True emblem of this arid land—  
And these are tall and broad and strong.  
With many a stiff and studded prong.  
As if Nature had on purpose made  
To bear the awning's cooling shade ;  
The hunter's blanket here supplies  
A shade from burning sun and skies.  
And while Cornello watches here  
He sees a wild horse sweeping near,  
Thrown high his head and tossed his mane.  
Now snorting stops and paws the plain.

A moment paused his swift career,  
Nor little recked the rifle's power;  
A moment blazed its Upas breath,  
The next he quivered there in death.  
Quick drowned his neigh the rifle's roar.  
And careful caught, his life streams pour,  
And this in part has here supplied  
The throbbing veins by fever dried.  
The fever cooled, with waning day  
And when Luna's beams began to play  
High o'er that cooled and freshened land,  
Then mounts again that languid band.  
But weak and reeling goes the steed,  
But Mustang he, the toughest breed  
That "ever served a horseman's need."  
With water less and lighter feed.  
But with deep'ning night's cooler air  
He walks the way all proudly there,  
While Polar star and Luna's light  
Still leads that wondrous guide aright,  
Across that pathless moonlit land,  
Whose spreading wastes of arid sand,  
On Nature's face a blighting scar,  
That tells of worlds' unannaled war.  
And silent all, and grim as death,  
Save when the low wind's moaning breath

Shall waft the starving cougar's cry,  
Or gleams the lean wolf's glaring eye,  
That tireless watches here the prey  
That slowly moves o'er desert way.  
And once in that long night was heard  
The hopeless cry of desert bird—  
The longest, lowest wail of fear  
That ever smote the trembling ear—  
Like lost and wandering spirits' wail,  
So mournful trembles on the gale.  
And though we have but little fear  
Of aught that walks the desert here,  
That awful note, that flies along  
Like doom of death in other tongue,  
Will strike a thrill to stoutest heart,  
And make the firmest vet'ran start.  
I've passed this wondrous bird, or wraith,  
By daylight on the desert path,  
Like statue standing on the mound  
That marked his home within the ground,  
And he would turn and bow to me  
In dignified, stiff courtesy,  
As master spirit might descend,  
And still to mortals slightly bend  
In deference to the formal rules  
Still honored in our social schools,

And then with solemn, pleading look,  
A glance we ever dread to brook.  
But nor sigh, nor sign, nor whispered word,  
Has scout or hunter ever heard.  
Save that low and mournful wail  
That lives so long upon the gale.  
And ghastly spreads the desert there,  
Like Luna's wastes when seen afar  
By eye of science, piercing high,  
Marks well that DESERT of the sky.  
In dead career she rolls on high,  
Nemesis of the upper sky,  
And while to us she seems all fair,  
A mummy 'mong the planets there  
Some blighting curse or volcanic breath  
Has wrapt her shores long in death ;  
Her unrecorded life, though vast,  
She but reflects a day that's past.  
But when her orb is dipping low  
Behind the sand hills' lowly brow,  
And darker rise night's shadows o'er  
The plain, lit by her rays no more,  
The morning star's hidden ray  
Heralds not yet the coming day ;  
No light to guide or point the way,  
For near, the Yellow Houses lay.

And in the dark his eye might not  
Note that low and unmarked grot:  
And here Cornello halts again,  
And soon upon the level plain  
The wearied hunters sink to sleep,  
Where howling wolves the vigils keep;  
But their restless guide still hurries on,  
And just as night melts into dawn  
He sees the sparkling brooklets lie  
Inviting 'neath his ravished eye!  
Nor long the draught delays him now,  
Nor long he laves his burning brow;  
Nor long his prayer of gratitude  
To Giver of this greatest good.  
Remembered those who, faint and lank,  
Lay dreaming there too weak to thank.  
To thank! Could tongue of earth's most favored tell  
The thoughts that in their bosoms swell.  
When grasping there the cool canteen  
That gave them back to life again?



## THE HUNTER'S DEFENSE.

[In the early winter of 187-, an ex-United States Deputy Surveyor and his little son thirteen years of age, with the twofold purpose of sport and profit, had, without knowing the imminent danger of that particular locality, pitched their camp at the head springs of the Colorado river, on the Staked Plains. The child, in pursuit of antelope, had wandered a mile or more from camp, when he was attacked by a large party of Indians. The father, hearing the rapid firing, rushed to his aid and the two made a defense unparalleled in history.]

### THE INDIAN'S CAMP.

On the dark shores of Cedar Lake  
The Indian prophet boldly spake.  
And 'mid their orgies strange and weird  
He had foretold that victory's bird  
Would on their banner surely light  
When next they met the craven white.  
And these dark bluffs, all cedar bound,  
With savage war songs loud resound,  
Till wolf and panther, startled, left  
The cave that yawned beneath the cleft,

And answered from more distant dells  
In notes less wild than Indian yells.  
The owlet, dazzled by the light,  
His eyes unused to such a sight,  
Had winged away in circling flight  
And sought the shades of gloomier night,  
And answered with his dreary wail,  
From darkest copse within the vale,  
In notes that drifted down the strand  
Like warnings from a spirit land.  
The shaggy bison dosing lay  
In many droves above the way ;  
But when upon his startled ear  
These songs of war and wails of fear  
Full shrilly struck, he shook his mane,  
And then away across the plain  
With heavy rolling gait he tore,  
Till darker vale and stiller shore  
He found, and then with starting eyes  
He lists the echo till it dies.  
Now the painted Medicine Pole  
They dance around with mystic bowl,  
Till from the shadow hunting ground  
The confined spirits whisper round,  
And teach in weird and ghastly way  
How many each red brave shall slay.

The campfire burns and blazes high,  
Till 'gainst the dun and mottled sky,  
In startling mirage strangely flung,  
Where tallest cedars overhung,  
The ghoul-like forms in bold relief;  
And none so awful as the chief.  
It seemed as if old Satan had  
From the dark regions of the bad  
Well gathered here the delegates  
In dark convention of the Fates,  
As swiftly through the wizard dance  
The grim and grimy figures prance,  
While the fitful shadows glancing fall  
Among the darksome cedars tall;  
And all combined to give the air  
Of a demon horde assembled there.  
They danced with lusty might and main,  
Till Luna, hanging o'er the plain,  
Warned them of the approaching hour  
When they must mount and swiftly scour  
The barren leagues that lay between  
Their dark camp and the valleys green,  
Which in moonlit beauty lay around  
The Colorado's highest mound,  
Where a hunter and his boy lay  
Sweetly dreaming of the day

When they should meet the loved at home,  
And ne'er again on desert roam.

THE HUNTER'S CAMP.

'Twas where the Colorado brings,  
In purling brooks from crystal springs,  
The cooling draughts that daily fill  
The countless herds upon the hill.  
'Twas where the wolf and antelope  
Bask in the sunlight on the slope.  
'Twas where the monster Rattlesnake  
Distilled his venom in the brake.  
'Twas snarling wolf and cougar gaunt  
And desert lion's favorite haunt ;  
And evening's shadows ever bring  
These untamed dwellers to the spring.  
'Twas where the dark Comanche came  
In search of wild or human game.  
'Twas where the thieving Indian bands,  
And all the dark and devilish clans  
That prey upon their fellow men,  
In turn sought shelter in the glen.  
Here a hunter and his boy found  
A charming range and hunting ground.  
Surveyor had to hunter turned—  
The sportsman's art had early learned ;

His heavy Sharp's unerring aim  
Brought down afar the wily game.  
No ruffian he; of gentle blood  
And noble mien, he proudly stood;  
Already on the lists of Fame  
He had inscribed an honored name.  
The lightning throes of pain had scarred  
His ample brow, but had not marred  
A heart still pure and true to love;  
And he was one who well could prove  
How much man will do and dare  
For those he loves, or for the fair  
Boy, who so soon will keenly feel  
How trusty are his nerves of steel.  
Far from camp the boy had strayed;  
The wily game had long delayed  
The sure shot that would end the chase;  
And then in glee he would retrace  
His way across the flow'ry lawns,  
With steps as agile as the fawn's,  
And happy meet the father's smile  
That waits impatiently the while.  
A fearful sight his eye hath seen,  
For far away across the green—  
But in full view—a straggling horde  
Of painted warriors swiftly rode.

And these keen riders of the plain  
Have seen the child and drawn the rein ;  
And mark how easy is the prey  
That falls before the lance to-day.  
Like eagles gathering to the prey.  
They form them now in wild array ;  
Like hurricane sweeping o'er the main,  
They gallop wildly o'er the plain,  
And sweep like Alpine avalanche  
Between him and his father's ranche.  
All hope of aid or flight was gone,  
And calmly there he stood alone.  
But he will dearly sell his life ;  
Before the barb'rous scalping knife  
Shall clip a lock of his fair hair  
They'll find, like lion in his lair,  
He'll sternly fight, and marksman keen,  
With many a bitter death between,  
With the swift messenger unseen,  
Like lightning's flash it cuts as clean.  
One thought for mother, father, God,  
His rest sticks planted in the sod,  
And then with level aim he poured  
The deadly lead into the horde.  
With even beats as swells the tide,  
And fatal aim, that child replied

“With shots that answered fast and well”  
The summons of these fiends of hell.  
And many an Indian mother wept,  
For where those heavy Creedmoors swept—  
Where Black Cloud’s bravest late had been—  
Where rifles flashed and shone the sheen  
Of glit’ring spear and wild black eye—  
His best and bravest warriors lie.  
Now sweeps the savage o’er the plain ;  
That trusty rifle rings again,  
And oft again, and ever will  
Prove the superior tact and skill  
That produced the noble arm  
That kept the hunter boy from harm.  
Around his rests the bullets tear,  
And sing and whistle through his hair ;  
But calm his brow, and brightly shone  
His clear blue eye, that met alone  
The hellish shouts and savage glare  
Of that wild mob who’d scalp him there.  
It seemed as if no human power  
Could save him from that fatal hour.  
Like sailor on the trackless deep,  
Where roll the waves that never sleep—  
Where lurks the storm that ever waits  
To do the bidding of the fates.

When rolls its fury o'er the wave,  
That foaming opes a hungry grave,  
And seething crests are lifted high  
That bid his fondest hopes to die;  
When his staunch vessel quakes and reel,  
And every creaking timber feels  
The power of the blasting breath  
That drives her on the track of death;  
Where fast the snowy breakers roll,  
That chill the blood and pall the soul.  
When canvas strong and noble mast  
Are doubly bent before the blast,  
And howls the storm and glares the flash,  
He stands him firm amid the crash,  
And makes the mighty rudder feel  
His iron hand upon the wheel;  
His ship obeys that nervous arm,  
And bears her bravely 'gainst the storm,  
And veering from that dang'rous yaw,  
She sweeps above the ocean's maw  
Like joyous bird of flitting wing  
That cleaves the azure lights of spring.  
He hears no more the deafning crash,  
For swifter than the lightning's flash,  
And higher than the storm cloud driven,  
His thanks are wafted up to heaven.



So well he worked that heavy gun,  
He deemed his life was lost or won—  
So skillful laid the rifle's sight,  
And firmly met the unequal fight.  
A father's eagle eye hath seen,  
And now he bounds him o'er the green  
Like antelope or nimble deer—  
With rapid bounds he draws him near;  
His heavy gun in enfilade,  
All deadly aimed, its terror stayed  
And checked in blood that rash advance,  
And kept afar the thirsty lance.  
As often as that rifle pealed  
A warrior in his saddle reeled,  
And many a writhing savage lay  
Like wounded snake in agony.  
When the boy heard that rapid roar  
And saw that line of fire pour,  
And loud and clear above the din  
He heard his father's rifle ring,  
One long loud shout of welcome gave  
To the daring father who would save—  
Who rushed to interpose his breast  
Where the deaths flew as thick and fast  
As ever from Pandora's box,  
And these in stunning thunder shocks,

Like eagle baffled of the prey,  
These swifter coursers swoop away.  
They circle quick and form again,  
And thickly drive the leaden rain ;  
Young Black Cloud, scowling in the van,  
Inspires anew the fiendish clan —  
With yells inhuman vainly strive  
The dauntless hunters now to drive.  
With steady nerve and dauntless eye —  
(They know to flee is but to die) —  
With deeper skill and practiced hand  
They decimate the dusky band ;  
And faster now the Indian falls,  
Pierced by Sharp's unerring balls ;  
For every bullet sent to rest  
Some savage Indian's troublous breast.  
When these staunch hunters would not swerve,  
It proved too much for Indian nerve.  
Then pallid fear and smarting pain,  
Grim terror glaring from the slain  
Like spectres from a demon world,  
Whose deadly darts unerring hurled,  
With all that superstition dreads,  
Hung like a death pall o'er the heads  
Of the few who still remained  
And until now the fight maintained.

Then froze the veins and chilled the fire,  
And vanished now the Indian's ire ;  
The wild warwhoop he raised no more,  
His soul had had enough of gore.  
And then he turned in wild dismay,  
And swiftly urged his steed away ;  
Low crouching on his saddle bow,  
His fastest efforts seemed too slow.  
The heathen faith that bade him bear  
The dead away, in that wild scare  
Was all forgot in selfish fear ;  
No laws of faith could hold him here.  
And when 'gainst distant horizon  
The panting steeds urged swiftly on,  
These long-range guns still surely aimed,  
Another and another maimed.  
And when the latest farewell shot,  
The heavy barrels glim'ring hot,  
To cool again were laid aside,  
He then with beaming joy and pride,  
But heart too full for utterance, pressed  
His Trojan boy to his breast ;  
And then the strong and noble form  
That never shook in battle's storm,  
Quaked now like willow in the wind,  
And tears relieved his burdened mind,

And then from ghastly scene they turned.  
That horrid vict'ry, cheaply earned,  
Had been enough to pall the heart  
And make the tears of nature start ;  
But Nature seemed as calm and still  
As if there had no sweeping ill—  
Like Upas breath or dark simoom—  
Drove like the darkling clouds of doom  
O'er these peaceful plains to-day,  
And swept the Indian's strength away.  
The clouds of smoke had rolled on high,  
And like Death's banners in the sky  
In sombre folds they wafted slow  
Above the gory field below,  
And seemed to bear the wraiths away  
Into the realms of brighter day ;  
And long will wait the dusky maid—  
The bullet hath her lover stayed ;  
From foot of Colorado's mound  
He passed to happier hunting ground.  
But strangely dark the flashing glance  
Of him who taught to poise the lance  
The youth who fell, all proudly game.  
Before the white man's surer aim.  
And they—the mothers of the brood—  
Like tigers when they smell the blood

Of murdered young, with savage ire  
And sullen word, and glance of fire,  
And mutter'd threat, and fiendish scowl—  
All join in long unearthly howl.  
Then with the tribe in Dance of Death,  
In whisper'd plans 'neath bated breath,  
They plan the ambush in the lair ;  
Then let the hateful white beware,  
And when the train through the gorge shall pass,  
(Unseen the foeman in the grass.)  
The rifle's flash behind the rock  
Will give no warning of the shock.  
By arm of vengeance sternly driven,  
Unheralded as bolt from heaven,  
The leveled gun or doubled bow  
Speeds swift the shaft that lays him low ;  
And even now, ere quivering life  
Has left the form, the scalping knife  
The bleeding scalp's already torn—  
A ghastly trophy to be worn ;  
It makes the wearer noble, great ;  
It is an Indian's pledge of hate,  
And many a hapless white shall fall  
Before the Indian's ambushed ball ;  
And oft the luckless emigrant  
Prepares at spring his breakfast scant

For the Indian, who will ride his horse  
And dance around his lifeless corse,  
And like the wolf, with instincts keen  
Will follow far, and still unseen.  
And strike the blow in pass or glen  
Like serpent gliding in the fen ;  
No halt he gives, but sends the pang :  
No rattle shakes, but sinks the fang :  
Or, like the cougar's lengthened bound,  
When springing on the baying hound.  
He darts from far to deal the blow  
With speed of shaft from doubled bow—  
Like eagle from his poise in air  
Darts down upon the timid hare,  
So he, from eagle's eyrie high,  
Where canon's wall against the sky  
Marks the spot where the eaglets feed  
And scream for flesh with jackal greed ;  
Where blasted shrub and shattered rock  
Tell of the lightning's rending shock.  
But Indian's eye, like eagle's sight,  
Is never dimmed by any light,  
And where the cougar dares not tread  
Has followed high the eagle's lead—  
Where none but birds or Indian's foot  
Has dared to trust the slender root—

And watches from that dizzy hight,  
With dauntless eye and searching sight,  
With patience, through the longest day  
That promises the chance to slay.  
And when the traveler toils below,  
Where briars run and cactus grow,  
All deadlly aimed with vision keen  
Will roar anon that short carbine.  
But darkly desperate as he is,  
There's one redeeming feature his—  
He'll never taint an Indian's name  
With midnight murder's horrid shame ;  
The night assassin's stealthy blow  
He dares to leave to civil foe ;  
And I have often safely slept  
Where these red warriors softly crept,  
And doubtless they have often looked  
Upon my form, and never brooked  
Or entertained the wish to slay ;  
They spurned to kill me as I lay.  
And often in my campfire's glare  
My breast has shown a mark so fair  
No coward's hand could then forego  
Such tempting hour to lay me low.  
I heard no Indian's bullet sing,  
Nor saw the flash, nor heard the ring.

Nor saw the frizzen's rolling spark  
By lurking foeman in the dark,  
And I would trust unto the death  
His friendly vow and plighted faith.  
No Indian with me ever broke  
His pledge or promise once bespoke.  
And I could tell—but 'twere too long—  
Of Indian's trust and white man's wrong :  
But deep the cutting truths would sting  
If pen of mine should truly bring  
And grave upon the blushing page  
The crimes that in this Christian age  
Have ruthless sent the thousand ills  
The friendless Indian keenly feels,  
Of pledge forgot and treaty broke,  
And all but slavery's galling yoke.  
A nations stint and agents' greed  
Have robbed the Indian in his need,  
And from his childhood's happier lands  
Have drove him to the desert sands.  
For full the catalogue and long—  
A hundred years of goading wrong—  
Have sapped at last the Indian's prime  
And taught him what he knows of crime :  
And rapidly his race has run,  
Like winter's snow in summer's sun,



For where the holy anthems waft  
The Indian gets the crazing draught,  
And where fair science has her schools  
Inviting wait the gaming pools,  
And smarting 'neath the ruthless rod  
He learns to doubt the white man's God,  
Let him who'd cast the coward's taunt  
Go meet the Indian in his haunt;  
He is no worm beneath the heel,  
But freeman born, and he can feel—  
And fiercely, sternly he will show,  
When rolling back the tide of woe  
From mountain snow or desert sand—  
How dearly sold his fatherland.  
His proven on a thousand fields,  
His is the soul that never yields:  
He's pledged a thousand hopeless fights  
To never kiss the hand that smites.  
Have I not heard the battle's roar  
When dying babe in mother's gore  
Has nerved anew the warrior's arm  
To roll the tide of blood along?  
Have I not seen—do I not know—  
Who struck the first insulting blow?  
Where Young's fair land in beauty lies—  
A happy clime 'neath sunny skies—

Was once the red man's quiet home,  
Before the treach'rous stranger come.  
'Twas here that fell the dastard blow  
That filled the Indian's cup of woe ;  
'Twas here the infant's dying wail---  
But you would shudder at the tale !—  
A thousand des'late homes have paid  
Too dearly for that needless raid.  
Though untaught, heathen, strangely wild,  
As much as we he's nature's child.  
Oh ! can we not be brave and just,  
And give the olive off'ring first ?  
Land of the Free ! the proudest name  
That ever blazoned page of fame—  
Most potent, brightest talisman  
That man e'er gave to struggling man—  
The farthest gleaming beacon light  
That ever broke the tyrant's night—  
Earth's millions smiled upon thy birth  
And hailed thy light remotest earth.  
The chain that bound the ages past  
Hath melted in thy rays at last,  
And Liberty's triumphs fast atone  
While Freedom smiles upon her own.  
Upon thy bright escutcheon's gleam  
So foul a stain does ill beseem

A nation that still leads the earth  
In every deed of fame and worth.  
The tongues of millions chant thy name  
In longest, loudest blast of fame—  
Thou, whose bright auspicious star  
The trembling tyrant sees afar,  
And knows its bright effulgent ray  
Is melting fast his chains away—  
Oh! let not yet thy temple fade  
From corners faith so nobly laid;  
Go teach thy agents better grace.  
The hypocrites of every race—  
The fair in word, but dark in deed—  
Apostates vile of every creed—  
Of demon heart and seraph face—  
They stain thy honor with disgrace,  
To crush the weak and aid the strong—  
To warp the right, abet the wrong—  
Thy honest mandates ever foil,  
And fatten on the stolen spoil.  
The vampires that on his vitals feed  
Are harpies of as fou! a breed  
As ever curs't the ages dark,  
Before one ray of freedom's spark  
Had gleamed along the roll of time  
And showed old Mammon's sordid crime

A dough faced dowdy, doubly damned,  
Whose sordid mind is ever crammed  
With schemes of most rapacious gain,  
With no remorse for others' pain ;  
A walking fraud, a living lie,  
A ghoulish thief of saintly eye,  
Too mean to live, unfit to die,  
Most sordid wretch beneath the sky.  
Oh ! stay his grasping, felon hand,  
That robs the starving Indian band,  
For famine is the stinging goad  
That drives him on to deeds of blood.

\* \* \* \* \*

While she, the wife and mother, pressed  
The cooing infant to her breast—  
There in the far off hunter's home  
She lay and prayed for those that roam.  
In the long watches of the night  
She often woke with startled sight ;  
In dreams she saw the savage foe,  
Swift and snake-like, crouching low,  
And then the flash and startling peal  
Of wild warwhoop and clanging steel ;  
And when she saw her lov'd ones die  
She woke in screaming agony.

And then, 'twixt hope and strange unrest,  
She watches toward the boundless west,  
And lingers long at latticed pane ;—  
“Oh ! will they never come again ?”  
Ah ! such is life ! Such terrors come  
To those that stay and those that roam.  
But shadow'd evils are the worst  
That ever darken'd, ever curst  
Man's uncertain paths of life  
From youth to age, and all too rife  
O'er some of us they darkling hang  
Till life is but a lengthen'd pang.  
Imagined evils murder more  
Than ever fall in battle's gore,  
And superstitions further go  
To swell the tide of human woe  
Than Pestilence or Famine gaunt,  
Or all the ills that follow Want ;  
For the handwriting on the wall  
In gloomy moods is seen by all,  
And dreams and nightmares still harass  
The sage and fool and ev'ry class,  
And signs and omens still portend  
Some dire mishap or sudden end ;  
Some falling orb knock into pi  
A world so often doomed to die,

And 'midst the dust of such a crash  
Go to—nothing—like a flash.  
The crafty tramp or maudlin clown  
Can set agog the idle town.  
For fifty cents he will relate  
The hidden things in store of fate ;  
Like Endor's hag, the Gypsy crone,  
With look of seer and sibyl tone—  
With many dark and occult tricks—  
Can paint the scene to river Styx.  
But I will leave the grov'ling jade ;  
My pen rejects the pasquinade.  
How vain and weak—how darkly blind—  
To heed these shadows of the mind !  
But judge not harshly ! Lend the light  
That shades the wrong and shows the right.  
Perhaps fair Science's rising ray  
May sometime drive the ghouls away,  
And cards and coffee cups reveal  
The mystic turns in Fortune's wheel,  
And thousand strange, yet simple signs,  
Show what's in other people's minds.  
'Twas when the sun was sweeping low,  
The mountains round in amber glow,  
Began to raise the curtain shade  
And hang the gloaming o'er the glade,

Where lay the hunter's lovely home,  
Whose flowers spring from richest loam—  
Where rose and vine and creeper run,  
And waste their glories in the sun.  
But all was hush'd ; you might have heard  
The faintest note of smallest bird.  
Where leans the elm tree o'er the rill  
Sits silent yet the whippoorwill,  
As loth to offer cheerless song  
Where happier music might belong.  
Naught but the night wind's gentlest swell,  
Or tinkling sound of distant bell,  
Or murm'ring sound of trickling rill,  
That flows adown the tow'ring hill,  
Breaks now the stillness of the glade  
That lies within the mountain shade,  
Where brightly in the deep'ning gloam  
Is nestled fair the hunter's home ;  
And no shipwreck'd sailor e'er saw,  
When drifting in the foaming flaw,  
The saving lighthouse' beacon light  
With happier heart or gladder sight  
Than they who from yon mountain's brow  
Are gazing on its glories now.  
And now upon the 'raptured ear,  
In sweeter tones and notes as clear

And softer than the mocking-bird  
From loving mate has ever heard,  
Breaks forth the wife in roundelay ;  
And such the potent music's sway  
The restless infant's hushed its cry  
When softly swells her lullaby ;  
No sweeter strain from fairer throat  
Did ever on the night wind float,  
And this is drank by eager ear  
Of two, how close, how more than dear,  
And while upon the mountain's brow  
They listen to her music now,  
While softer than Æolian notes  
The music to the mountain floats ;  
No sweeter song from fairer wife  
Did ever cheer a husband's life.  
Oh ! can he leave the home again  
Where lives and swells that happy strain ?  
How can he steel a husband's breast  
And turn from home so doubly blessed ?  
Oh ! will he e'er again exchange  
For toilsome chase on desert range,  
Where savage beast and wary foe  
Forever wait to lay him low,  
For loving smile and virtuous kiss  
And all a mortal knows of bliss ?



Tortuous are our lines of life ;  
The world sees not our spirits' strife ;  
Unseen the undercurrents strong  
That drive our life boat strangely wrong.  
But when she sang "The Soldier's Dream"  
He could not brook the touching theme ;  
A loud report on welkin rang,  
And then the wife like chamois sprang—  
For well she knew the signal gun  
That told the hunter's wanderings done—  
And long before the echoes died  
She sped like fawn up mountain side,  
And soon in tearful joy pressed  
Her son and husband to her breast.  
How sweetly falls such happy hour,  
When Heaven's dearest blessings shower ;  
When loves nnite to never part,  
And flow these dew drops of the heart ;  
When every pleasure hastes to fill,  
And quick forgotten every ill ;  
For on his memory's tablet there  
Was wiped away each rankling scar ;  
No more afar will hunter roam  
As long as shines the light of home.

## COLORADO JACK.

A May day sun had rolled on high,  
And from the garish sun and sky  
I rested 'neath the cooling shade  
A spreading live oak greenly laid  
Athwart the fresh and loamy soil  
To plow had been my morning toil.  
Its beauty held for me a charm.  
I would not strike it from the farm;  
A broad and spreading evergreen,  
It ever wore the summer's sheen;  
'Midst winter's ice or rimed with snow,  
Its foliage owned the summer's glow,  
And broke the dull monotony  
That lay beneath the wintry sky,  
And called us back to happier time  
When summer smiled upon her clime;  
It ever wore the smile of spring;  
The happy birds came there to sing  
'Midst this oasis of the vale,  
And many a softer song and tale

Their warbling throats would seem to tell,  
That wove with softest fairy spell  
The woof of many a happy hour  
Unknown save in the wildwood's bower :  
And there beneath its boughs I found  
A softer couch upon the ground  
Than pampered monarch ever blessed,  
Although his stately bed were dressed  
With finest furs or softest down  
That ever graced the breast of swan.  
When sought from wine and wassail's roil—  
The rest that follows humble toil.  
While lying there upon my back  
There came to greet me hunter Jack—  
Colorado Jack. I knew him by  
His stalwart form and eagle eye ;  
I'd met him on the pathless range  
Where Duck Creek heads against the plains  
Had eat his sav'ry bison ham,  
Cooked by his "dug-out's" dingy jamb ;  
Had shared his friendship as his fare,  
And wound the yarns he spun me there.  
He'd spent near half the fleeting span  
Of days allotted unto man  
Upon the wild frontier's domain,  
A hunter on the western plain.

I did not know the deep disgust  
In which he held the fields of dust  
Where toil Cain's millions 'neath the ban  
Fruit loving Eve bequeathed to man.  
And, proudly sweeping round my arm,  
I pointed out my valley farm,  
Sure of some word of praise or cheer.  
Jack shrugged his shoulders with a sneer,  
And eye and lip too well betrayed  
How much he felt this keen tirade :  
The boy goes "whistling to his plow"—  
Methinks I hear his carol now—  
And sweetly swells his thoughtless song  
As with measured tread he plods along  
The fresh and teeming furrow where  
Late cut his bright and gleaming share.  
With slouchy garb and shuffling gait  
He treads the path marked out by fate ;  
His absent eye and mind heeds not  
The weary toiler's cheerless lot.  
I whistled, too, when first I tried  
The thousand ills his way betide—  
The trade the journals love to show  
On paper with such happy glow,  
With hands that never held the plow  
Or wiped the brine from throbbing brow

With soiled sleeve or trembling hand  
 While toiling o'er the heated land.  
 With shoulders bent and limbs in pain  
 He tracks the weary way again,  
 As cut by cut, and foot by foot,  
 'Neath many a grub and running root,  
 With many a stall and jerk and pull,  
 With shackling nag or heady bull.  
 Then rolled in pain, from over toil  
 Too long maintained on stubborn soil.  
 Through sultry night with aching limb.  
 Oh! couldst thou take the place of him,  
 Thou kid-gloved praiser of the farm.  
 And wrench in pain thy puny arm  
 Would twist awry thy pictured joys  
 That wait to bless the farmer's boys.  
 It may be very nice, but I  
 Can't for the life of me see why.  
 There's not a schoolmiss reached thirteen  
 Among the thousands I have seen  
 But who has told in lofty strain  
 Of "golden fields of waving grain."  
 The farmer gets his meed of praise,  
 But 'tis a kind of charity haze—  
 A costless breath of flimsy song—  
 A "will o' the wisp" that gleams along

Through heat and dust and drifting sand.  
Where thorns and thistles curse the land—  
And under the dark curse of Cain  
He totters through a life of pain.  
Unhonored and unheralded,  
And often much too poorly fed.  
“Forget it not”—“I’ll none in mine”—  
I’d sooner cross the roaring brine  
With but an inch of timber thrown  
Between me and the dark unknown.  
And in the brakes round Singapore—  
Where tigers yell and lions roar,  
And loafers chase—where serpents hiss  
And man salutes with Joab kiss—  
I’d rather spend my days among,  
Though nature’s savage hand has flung  
Throughout her tangled jungles dark  
A ruddier blaze and wilder spark  
Of savage spirit’s seething fire,  
That burns in hot, unsated ire,  
Than any other spot of earth  
In brake or jungle brought to birth.  
I’d rather hunt for British pay,  
And live by what my hand could slay  
Of India’s monstrous snarling breeds  
Than Cain-like dig ’mong teeming weeds

That spring to choke the tardy grain  
That wilts for want of work or rain.  
And now you may just bet your life  
Fore I'd maintain a "corn fed" wife,  
Perhaps like "Tam O'Shanter's" spouse—  
With restless tongue and stormy brows  
Forever lowring o'er my way  
Through hideous night and hopeless day,  
With voice shrill and fierce as high,  
And taunt and menace in her eye,  
And cutting glance and insult keen.  
And fiercely glaring savage mien—  
Hurl brooms and jennies at my head.  
And snapping at me wish me dead;  
(Such scenes indeed would "gar me greet."  
I ne'er could deem such counsels sweet.  
And would not mind my nerves to try  
My patience 'gainst her deviltry.)  
Or hear the little wrangling Jacks,  
With unkempt hair and ragged backs.  
Diseased and squalid, pale and gaunt.  
Roil o'er the bitter crumbs that Went  
Has snatched from Famine but to give  
The beggar's bitterest boon—to live  
From birth through idle, vicious youth,  
And manhood drifting far from truth—

A swarm of superstitious tools,  
To swell the world's great crop of fools ;  
Or, see the wife who truly loved  
In such ordeal too hardly proved,  
With wasting form and weeping eye  
Recount the wants I'd fain supply :  
Compelled to watch, day after day,  
Her happy spirit wear away  
'Neath pain and toil, want and woe,  
All powerless to stay the blow  
That threatens soon to sweep from earth  
The only light that cheers my hearth,  
And watch the gaunt form at the door  
That ever hovers round the poor,  
And find it daily ghastlier grown—  
A barrier 'cross my pathway thrown—  
A dusk and darkly blighting shade  
Between me and God's bounty laid—  
And struggle for my daily bread  
With tired heart and aching head—  
The scanty, stinted recompense  
Wealth still metes out to indigence.  
Though life's replete with toils and cares,  
And wrenching pains and palling fears,  
And errors, ever followed fast  
By retribution's searching blast ;



And though our little darkened day  
Is rarely cheered by flick'ring ray  
Of light let in to mortals here,  
With much to hate and more to fear,  
'Tis more than all to feel and know  
There's love above for all below,  
And something cheering still to be  
Untrammelled yet and proudly free,  
And 'fore I'd own a granger's guild  
I'd see this country's farms untilled,  
Bear northern thistles, burs or tares.  
Uncut by plodding plowman's shares,  
'Till one vast brake had roughly dressed  
Each barren field within the west ;  
I'd go to where the Florida Keys  
Lie low along her treacherous seas.  
For there beneath the greenish wave,  
In many a secret coral cave---  
Unseen save by the mermaid's eye---  
The crumbling bones of thousands lie  
Piled and heaped in ghastly rows  
And white as Polar Mountain snows,  
Where mermaid nymphs and naiads keep  
The strange arcana of the deep.  
Here wreckers tell of ghastly sights  
Seen o'er the waves on stormy nights ;

And many a sight and sound of fear  
Has palled the fisher's eye and ear,  
When sing on high the ocean gales,  
And breaker's foam like bellying sails  
Is flung on high be'ore the blast  
Like flying shreds from shiver'd mast,  
And booming thunders o'er the seas  
Long roll their echces 'mong the trees,  
And ocean from her deepest cave  
Has flung on high her mountain wave  
That rolls upon the trembling shore  
With starting dash and deafning roar,  
And night and storm and flash combine  
To show that death has laid his line  
And flung his meshes far and wide  
Along this seething, whirling tide.  
Then come the wraiths from thousand wrecks,  
To walk again their phantom decks,  
And many a pale and sheeted form  
Is seen 'midst flashes of the storm,  
And many a shriek and startling wail  
Is borne upon the howling gale.  
And awe-struck wreckers tell again  
Of phantom ships that sail the main,  
Misguiding with their treach'rous lights—  
Like floating gas on murky nights—

The ships that Fate has doomed to death  
Beneath the storm king's Upas breath ;  
And all the straggling Gypsy host  
That find subsistence on her coast  
Wear haggard, scared, cadaverous looks,  
As though oft used to sight of spooks ;  
And, if attention ye will lend,  
They'll make thy hair stand stark on end.  
But mine won't rise. I can't believe ;  
For storm-lit scenes will oft deceive,  
And foam-capt breakers oft belie  
When viewed with superstition's eye.  
But this, and more of real harm,  
I'd risk in preference to the farm,  
And take my chances on her flats  
Against the fever, flies and gnats,  
Where a tropic sun forever warms  
To hungry life her myriad swarms—  
Her insect clouds that buzzing pour  
Along her dark and dismal shore—  
A target be for every beak  
That hovers o'er the sluggish creek,  
And furnish food for every one  
That makes her forests doubly dun,  
And make my camp where nightly sing  
The myriad hosts that whet the sting ;

'Mid mist and miasm, murk and mire  
Should brightly blaze my dim campfire,  
By green lagoon and slimy pond.  
Where the Yellow Plague still waves her wand.  
Nemesis-like, she rears her throne  
O'er murky regions all her own—  
Disease upon her poison breath,  
And in her glance the Yellow Death,  
With ring far around her humid clime,  
Reaps faster than the scythe of Time  
E'er gleamed along the ghastly swath  
That swelter'd o'er the reeking earth.  
The alligator's scaly spoil,  
To seek and slay should be my toil;  
Though hard the task and dull the sport,  
I'd take his hide for northern mart.  
Or where Alaska's mountain brows,  
Eternal wrapt in polar snows,  
Gleam high above her frozen seas,  
That never ripple to the breeze  
That sweeps along her icy shore,  
Where not a bud and not a flower  
Has sprung beneath the warming beam  
To smile in beauty, and redeem  
The desolation of her zone.  
Yea, I would wander on alone,  
Where St. Elia's miles of spire  
Have pierced her frozen heavens higher  
Than any other mountain's brow;  
Has held aloft eternal snow,  
And rears her head among the lights  
That dimly seen from far-off heights

A greater jewel seems in air  
Than brightest star that glimmers there ;  
Yet sometimes round her brow is thrown  
A gauzy mantle lightly flown  
From far-off bogs that oozing lie  
Beneath a warmer sun and sky.  
At other times a halo bright---  
The Borea's strange fantastic light---  
Shoots far around her peerless brow  
And cheerless as her crystal snow,  
Still half redeems the ghastliness  
And gloom of her white wilderness,  
A brighter light more widely thrown  
Across her ghastly glit'ring zone  
Than e'er was seen by mortal eyes  
To shoot athwart our Southern skies.  
I'd hunt along her frozen vales,  
Unknown to song or hunter's tales,  
Whose snowy wilds have never heard  
The music swell in song of bird,  
Nor happy peal of lover's song  
Has rolled voluptuous there along.  
But mantling pride has ever pressed  
Dame Nature's stark and pulseless breast,  
And through its everlasting rime  
She feels not e'en the tramp of time ;  
Where northern fox and Polar bear  
Unknown to man has laid his lair ;  
Where bear nor fox nor living thing  
Has heard the hunter's rifle ring ;  
When bick'ring shards were shooting fast  
I'd face the keenest boreal blast,

And bare a hunter's freeman's brow  
Against her eddying, whizzing snow ;  
And if I had to freeze and die  
I'd run the chance to petrify.

And here old Jack first caught his breath ;  
He thought him of no other death  
That he would rather risk or dare  
Than share the farmer's toilsome care.  
And there I lay all lank and weak,  
'Neath such a flighty zigzag streak  
Of wizard fancies, wildly laid  
Before me 'neath that live oak's shade.  
I had been hot and cold by turns ;  
Had felt the nameless qualms and burns ;  
Had felt the fever in my veins,  
And flinched from thousand fancied pains ;  
Had felt the glacier's freezing breath  
And shivered o'er Jack's icy death.

And then he burst into a laugh  
At the producer of the staff.  
It rather stung my granger pride,  
And, somewhat piqued, I thus replied :  
If all the world, like you, sir Jack,  
Should sail on such a wand'ring tack,  
Where would they land, I pray you tell,  
Or harbor find this side of——well  
I will not name that classic land  
That seems to stretch on every hand.  
You've drawn them fine and painted well  
The vagaries of your wizard spell ;

Yet to reproach I won't presume ;  
The task is more than I'll assume  
To reconstruct. Dame Nature's plan  
Diversity has shown in man ;  
And who is happiest, wisest, best—  
The careless rover of the West,  
Or nervous banker, merchant pale,  
Or jolly tar before the gale?

## MY OLD MOUNTAIN HOME.

Oh give me again my Old Mountain Home,  
'Mong her forests of chestnut in freedom to roam.  
Where the pine ever sways in the soft mountain  
breeze

And the laurel and spruce are fairest of trees.  
How oft do I see thee! Oh scenes of my youth.  
Where my life flowed along in the channels of truth;  
My heart as untainted as thy own mountain air.  
As stainless my soul, my conscience as clear.  
The friendships there formed but brighten with age,  
In the folds of the heart is a bright written page;  
Remembrance oft scans with a tear in her eye,  
Retracing the names that never can die.  
But where are the friends my boyhood knew?  
The honest and brave, the noble and true—  
Or the fair ones that felt a sister's regard,  
Whose virtue but asked for friendship's reward?  
In fancy I roam there and call them apart,  
But only find darker my void of heart—  
Affection loud calls but echo is mute.  
The hand is long withered and broken the lute.  
And naught but the song of the dark waving pine  
Replies to the yearnings, these heart cries of mine;  
And the hearts of the loved, the true and the brave,  
Have crumbled to dust in the moss-covered grave.  
But a few yet remain on the pathways of earth,  
Far scattered apart from the place of their birth,



With hearts that are withered, and brows which old  
Time [rime.  
Has marked with deep furrows and frosted with  
But oh! give me again my home in the wilds,  
And my heart will yet thrill as young as a child's—  
Let me wander again her far shaded lawns,  
And my nerves will be tense as the light-bounding  
fawn's;  
Let me stand once again. and drink in the roar  
On the cedar-bound cliffs where her waters bright  
pour:  
On her high beetling crags again let me roam,  
Where the ivy hangs high o'er the cataract's foam,  
When nature has thrown in her wild playful moods,  
Through Eden like vales her swift mountain floods,  
Where the spruce-pine and cedar are brightest of  
green,  
And the ivy and laurel lend charms to the scene.  
Let me hunt once again in her dark solitudes,  
And chase the wild deer in her far-stretching woods,  
Or wait for the bear in the deep rocky glen,  
Where the panther's eye gleams in his ivy bound den,  
Where the Cougar stalks forth, when the moon rides  
on high,  
With fear on his tongue and death in his eye.  
Where the lean wolf long howls from the caverns  
around,  
Then follows the prey with the faith of the hound,  
Where sharp through the gloaming comes the cata-  
mount's cry,  
Or seen the strange flash of his wild, lurid eye.  
My home is with these, for I love the wild note

Of the long-bottomed wolf and the flying cayote,  
And the scream of the panther is music to me,  
When his eye flashes bright in the dark cedar tree ;  
For here in these wilds no Shylock has trod,  
And alone on the mountains, the temples of God,  
There's a spell on the heart, a charm on the soul  
And visions of beauty, like an unwinding scroll,  
Unfold their rare glories before the wrapt eye,  
And pictures immortal, are hung upon high ;  
Creations of Thought, in the bright Far Away,  
But the glow of their splendors no pen can portray.  
But the real is there. I have stood on the brow  
And gazed on the fair panorama below,  
Of woodland and dell and mountain and stream,  
Where the sheen of its crystal reflected the beam.  
I've stood there, and looked when the silver of dawn  
Had lit up the jewels that garnished the lawn :  
I've looked there when Luna swung bright in the sky,  
And heaven's bright beacons like watchers on high.  
On the scenes that they lit like a dreamland of love.  
Oh ! Lookout ! I love thee ! 'Thou'rt young in thy age.  
And summers may smile or tempests may rage,  
Thou art wild in thy beauty and grand in thy charms.  
Fair in thy sunshine, sublime in thy storms.  
I've wandered away in life's strange career,  
And the magnet of travel has lured me far—  
The dim desert trail my footsteps have pressed,  
Afar o'er the wastes of the wind driven west.  
I've stood on grand mountains that tower'd on high.  
And gazed upon scenes that gladdened the eye ;  
But thy heights loom aloft, wherever I roam, [Home.  
And my heart ever pleads for my Old Mountain

## THE HUNTER.

[Written and handed to my son EDGAR, who had just returned with me from a fruitless morning hunt.]

Oh, talk not to me of the hunt and the chase,  
'Twill surely bring thee to want and disgrace.  
I know what it is to starve and to freeze ;  
I've walked myself down—half off at the knees—  
And rambled the thickets and wildwoods around  
Till the seat of my trowsers were dragging the ground ;  
Yet flat is my pocket, my larder unfilled  
With the hides I have sold or the game I have killed.  
I've watched at the dusk and again at the dawn  
Till I'd shot at a dove or a motherless fawn,  
And ambushed the path for the weary old buck—  
Whose instinct and cunning evaded such luck.  
And vainly I waited my skill but to prove  
With the bullet that lay in the bright twisted groove.  
I've listened all gladly to the gobbler's loud horn,  
As he bowed out the night and welcomed the morn.  
But while creeping through briar and tangled rat-  
tan,

Been chagrined to watch him divining my plan,  
As all *qui vive* he stood more keenly to view—  
Then tauntingly gobbled, and prudently flew.  
When the swish of the storm was howling on high,  
And the glint of its shards gleamed cold in the sky,  
And a mantle of snow lay deep on the ground.  
I've followed the bison like a tireless hound,

And my rifle has roared on the desolate plain  
Till long lay the lines of his dark shaggy slain ;  
But hard was the toil and light was the sport—  
And lighter the price they paid at the Fort ;  
So many were damaged or counted as kip—  
Small pay had the hunter for the toilsome trip.  
I've hunted the lean wolf on the far-stretching wastes.  
And studied his habits and pampered his tastes  
With strychnine and bullet, and all the known ways  
That are practiced by hunters in these latter days.  
But though they were numerous and hungry enough,  
They were not to be taken by any such stuff.  
In the low-lying vales of the dark Pilot Grove—  
In the dim long ago 'twas oft mine to rove,  
And the wilds of the Sulphurs have rang with the  
                    roar

Of the rifle I prized so highly before  
The share of the granger had blasted the lawn,  
And brocket and buck and light-bounding fawn—  
Startled at strangers—had started in quest  
Of the chaparral brakes of the far-stretching West ;  
Far have I followed in the wake of the sun,  
And though deadly the aim of my far-reaching gun,  
I'll tell you, my boy—you need never doubt—  
The track is too cold—'twill never "pan out."  
Through sunshine and calm—the wind and the rain—  
O'er mountain and river and wood-beaten plain—  
And tracked up the loafer to his wild mountain lair.  
And threaded along on the blue mountain's brow,  
Wherever a cougar or panther could go,  
And tried all the tricks and traps of the day.  
In a too sanguine effort to make hunting pay,

Till I'm forced to conclude it won't never win.  
So take my advice—don't never begin ;  
For the fact is too patent—'tis plain to be seen—  
(And putting it mild, to say) I've been "green."  
I've been smoked in camp. where the winds ever  
fan,

Till my brow has been bronzed to the color of tan ;  
Have lived without water and eat without bread,  
And dined off the haunch where a loafer had fed ;  
Have camped with the Indians and hunted with  
scouts,

And slept on my arms on wild desert routes,  
With the black weeping clouds for a canopy thrown,  
Till wet through and through, and chilled to the  
bone ;

I've gazed in their depths when the lightning flashed  
red—

Unheeded the thunders that rolled o'er my head—  
For I knew that the storm would soon roll away,  
And the blackness of night would melt into day.  
There's no milk in this cocoa, remember, my son,  
I've sawed and been sold quite cheaply for one.  
I'd as soon have a bee-course in Arkansas flats,  
Or a sand-bar claim in low Florida mats,  
Or a blowed out old mine in Cordillera's brows,  
Or a green-house located in Alaska's cold snows,  
As a hunting outfit or an old rusty gun.

The man who's not tried it is the man who has won ;  
And keep this idea well back in your head :  
Your father's investment in powder and lead  
Had as well been sunk in a bottomless stream  
Or paid to the sharks of a lottery scheme.

## THE FOG.

The morn broke through a humid sky ;  
The day star scarcely seen on high  
Gleamed pale and dim above the plain  
That scarce reflects its rays again ;  
The lagging shades creep slowly west  
Before the orient's rising crest,  
And linger long before the light  
Can roll them onward with the night ;  
Yon darkling wall of grayish fog  
Like mantle hangs o'er lake and bog :  
The mists that float above the stream,  
Like lengthened puffs of cooling steam,  
Impervious to the struggling ray  
That lights the canon into day ;  
And though hard by the waters pour,  
You scarce can hear their sullen roar,  
And were it not for the trembling cliffs  
That hang aloft in massy rifts  
You would not know the waters played  
And leaped along o'er near cascade.  
The wolf withheld his lengthened note :  
Unheard the cry of sly cayote ;  
The bison viewed with lazy gaze  
The creeping lines of heavy haze  
That hung like curtains o'er the west  
And clad the plains in an ebon vest ;

The cougar, sought among the rocks  
Where swept the raven's silent flocks,  
His lair among the beetling steeps  
Above where fog-line slowly creeps :  
The plain fox leaves unchased the hare,  
And slinks away to his hidden lair ;  
The jaguar feels the mighty spell,  
And startles not with rending yell  
The antelope, that eyes afar,  
Suspiciously, this truce from war.  
But far along these fog-bound walls  
The fleecy mist yet higher crawls,  
Till mounting to the canon's verge  
There rolls a scething, stygian surge,  
That like a lake of inky stain  
Rolls its black breakers o'er the plain.  
I stood on bleak Mons Ensi's brow,  
And gazed along that high plateau—  
A lawn that lies above the plain,  
Like island shores above the main—  
A highway where the desert blast  
Oft sweeps in fury fierce and fast,  
But now as calm as mountain glen,  
And dark and murk as dismal fen ;  
Far up on high the surges rolled,  
And wrapt the mountain in their fold,  
And mounting higher 'neath the sun,  
Whose broad red disk now dim and dun,  
Like dying lamp 'neath smoky screen,  
His fireless ray was hardly seen.  
Like beacon fires across the bay,  
Whose light fast wanes with dawning day ;

Like swamping wreck he slowly swung,  
And dimly pale the ray he flung  
Through these vast mists, that mounting high,  
Now blots him from the murky sky.  
And night has flung her sable pall  
Of midnight darkness over all,  
And I had stood on mountain peaks  
Where lightnings played their zigzag freaks,  
Where fogs and clouds had borne the rain  
High o'er the thirsty arid plain,  
Or seen its lurid flashes glow  
In foggy depths that far below  
Was weeping o'er the drenched fields  
That trembled 'neath the thunder peals ;  
But ne'er on mountain's top or low lagoon  
Had midnight shadows fallen at noon,  
Or seemed so thick or densely dark,  
Without one ray or glim'ring spark  
To pierce its canopy and reveal  
The darkness one could almost feel ;  
Without one dawn of faintest light,  
The sun seemed drowned in gulf of night,  
And nature wrapt in sablest gloom,  
As black and silent as the tomb.  
How welcome then had thunders pealed,  
Though lightning's flash had but revealed  
The landscape but a stone's cast round,  
And shown once more the solid ground !  
Though but a moment blazed its course,  
How welcome light from any source !  
I've felt the nightmare creeping o'er,  
When fever held me in her power ;



I've felt my slow and sluggish breath,  
Like broken flaws or curling wreath  
Of creeping steam or wavering smoke,  
Before the storm cloud rudely broke,  
And cleared and cooled the midday air  
From fog and vapor floating there.  
I've breathed the stifling, humid breath  
Of fearful caves deep in the earth,  
Where festering dead had thickly lain,  
Of savage tribes that roamed the plain  
In by-gone days of the buried past,  
But oblivion locks their mem'ries fast;  
No writer's page or poet's song  
Has borne their tales of life along,  
Nor sung the scenes that curst or blest.  
Alas! such tale were like the rest,  
For here a deeply written page  
Calls us back through many an age—  
Cuts deep this lesson on the heart,  
So often vainly coned apart—  
The tale the ages still repeat—  
'Tis Nature's lesson all replete:  
The waves of death are rolling fast,  
And sweeping man into the past.  
I've lain on the bayou's cyprus bank,  
And felt the miasm thick and dank  
Creep 'neath the curtains of the night,  
And choke the breath, obscure the sight,  
But never dreamed or felt till now  
Such weight of darkness girt my brow.  
At last its waves began to lift—  
With here and there a shifting rift—

Like dungeon window to the sight,  
Through which there struggles tempered light,  
And through these loop holes hung on high  
I caught quick glimpses of the sky ;  
It ne'er had looked so brightly blue,  
While now and then a ray shot through—  
Soon grown to dazzling sheets of light,  
That pleased the heart and dazed the sight ;  
Then that bright orb of heat and light  
Swung high and clear o'er shades of night,  
That rolled its mantling pall away  
And fled before the face of day.  
I watched some cirri floating fast,  
Like phantoms of that gloomy past,  
But from the sun and the rising blast  
They sped like arrows far and fast  
Till not a shred of its mantle flew  
Athwart that vault of brilliant blue.  
I followed far with wondering sight  
This strange twin sister of the night,  
And watched its inky breakers roll,  
Like the blackened shreds of a charring scroll :  
It smote the earth like a comet's tail,  
And wrapt the mountain and the vale,  
And flung on high around the sun  
Billows of shade so darkly dun  
They blotted out his far off ray,  
And cut in twain the length of day ;  
But nature woke to a midday morn,  
Unheralded by rime of dawn,  
For one broad blaze of dazzling light  
Had swept from earth the shades of night.

## THERE'S A DESOLATE SPOT.

There's a desolate spot on a wild mountain's hights,  
Where fancy oft stops in her wonderful flights,  
And long does she pause and sadly she broods  
In the dark waving groves of these untrodden woods :  
For the wild grass now waves on the crumbling wall,  
And the roof-tree is torn from the desolate hall,  
And the hearths that once welcomed the young and  
the gay  
Are moss-grown and forgotten, and sunk in decay.

For felon hand and mountain storm  
Have wrecked each vestige, trace and form,  
And cold oblivion's ruthless wave  
Has hid each relic love would save.  
And noxious weed and creeping vine,  
And mountain moss and jessamine  
In rank profusion strew the ground  
As to disguise the hallowed mound,  
And hide from love's unsated eye  
A picture that can never die ;  
'Tis woven with my memory,  
A fadeless form before my eye ;  
I cannot tear it from my breast ;  
Like an oasis offering rest,

That greenly springs from desert's face  
Alone on boundless, cheerless waste.  
A cherished spot, so purely fair  
It stands a landmark time should spare;  
It rests upon my path of life,  
Unbroke by all my being's strife,  
Like sunshine on some stormy shore.  
But thou art mine—oh! no more!  
But though the owlet nightly cries,  
And mournfully the wolf replies  
From desolation's gloomy dell,  
Their hollow wailings seem to tell  
Of other days and happier time,  
When pleasure wooed her native clime.  
For yet the peerless mountain rose  
Makes fragrant every breeze that blows,  
And groves of laurel, spruce and pine,  
And ivy's bloom and flowering vine  
Yet woo the eye on every hand  
Like patches of enchanted land,  
And seem to shame our foolish pride  
That set exotics side by side  
With these, the children of the soil,  
That sprung without our care or toil.  
But these are gone; nor bud, nor flower,  
Cheers now that long-deserted bower;  
For vandal hands have razed the pale  
That broke and turned the ruder gale,  
While gentler hands have gone to dust,  
And nature would not keep the trust.  
But morns as fair and scenes as bright,  
And skies that shed as azure light,

And moons that have as softly shone  
O'er scenes that love had called her own,  
Have smiled on this, that's ever given  
Its bright reflections back to heaven ;  
And on this leveled, moss-grown wall,  
Once stood the roof-tree of a hall  
That looked across the mountain high  
Like port of home or beacon light—  
A place of welcome, pleasure, rest,  
Inviting to the weary guest ;  
And youth and age and talent came,  
With many a proud and stately dame,  
With all the throngs that welcome brings,  
Would come to taste our mountain springs  
And breathe the pure untainted air  
That ever wafts its zephyrs there,  
Loaded with the fresh perfume  
From laurel's blush and ivy's bloom.  
A Lane, the noblest of a race  
Whose humblest son would scorn to trace  
Through gentler blood or prouder name  
His title to a niche where Fame  
Has writ her errors on the page  
But to misguide each after age,  
My mother's sire, of gentle birth,  
Had built his home and laid his hearth  
Far in the wooded mountain's wild,  
And many an hour has he beguiled  
My eager ear with tales of truth.  
Most trusted mentor of my youth—  
A grand old man of noble brow—  
Methinks I see his features now,

And gay retainers gathered there  
With many a dainty valley fair,  
And mountain lass and country swain,  
And young wassailers from the plain,  
To chase the phantom forms of night  
Through many a brief and fleeting night,  
When music's swell would thrilling roll  
Its sweet afflatus o'er the soul.  
And sparkling eyes would flashing tell  
The bosom's soft responsive swell  
To eyes that flung the challenge back  
With blushing mien and coyish tact.  
And glancing feet would quick repeat  
Each note upon the music sheet,  
Till chandeliers' unbroken light  
Had lit the latest hour of night.  
Who has not felt his bosom swell,  
Responsive to the mystic spell,  
When love and wine and music stole  
The coldness from his sober soul?  
Who has not felt the bounding thrill  
That comes and goes without the will?  
When gathering war's clarion notes  
Had been rebuked by thousand votes,  
And civil people stood aghast  
At gathering war cloud's threatened blast,  
In vain the call for volunteers,  
Nor gold, nor fame, could tame their fears.  
Till skill had caught the thrilling fife—  
Then eager was the rush for strife.  
Ever beaming, wise and kind—  
Loved trainer of my youthful mind.

When bristling batteries seemed a prize  
That offered death to terror's eyes,  
Or grinning muskets threat'ning bent  
O'er rifle pit or battlement,  
Or bickering sabres' ringing clash  
Seemed awful as the lightning's flash,  
The lively music's thrilling peal  
Would transform human hearts to steel ;  
Its strange, impassioned, dazing strain  
Would fling a madness o'er the brain,  
And men would hunt the paths of death  
Obedient to its siren breath.  
A subtle influence, ever strong,  
Will mold our souls to notes of song ;  
To weep, to laugh, to save, or slay—  
All will its mystic power obey.  
I've stood within that merry hall,  
'Midst the rapt mazes of the ball,  
And heard its volume roll along  
Like echoes of a seraph's song,  
But the sweetest notes that charmed us there  
Have died upon the mountain air,  
And the young hearts that beat again  
Responsive to that happy strain  
Are still or scattered far and wide  
Like wrecks upon the ocean tide  
That storms have driven on the shore,  
To reunite on earth no more.  
And on these wrecks the careless stare,  
With coldly careless distant air,  
And little deem what hearts can hide  
That still look back with loving pride

On scenes that glimmer through the haze  
Of past but unforgotten days,  
That cheer us still where'er we roam—  
*But some have never had a home.*



## MADAM MOLLIE MCGUIRE.

I once knew a woman who knocked into pi  
The time-honored dogma, that figures won't lie,  
Her rules worked but one way and never would prove,  
While she made people blink at the bargains she drove.  
And if Greenleaf or Loomis, Davies or Ray,  
Had but flourished later and taught in her day,  
She'd shown them all up for weak-minded fools,  
And taken the twist clean out of their schools--  
And Bryant's and Stratton's would go to the rooks,  
If she could get but one chance to tangle their books.  
You might with a hackle rake heathendom through,  
And possibly might, in some hole find a few,  
As deep steeped in meanness, as low moral sot,  
Or treacherous quite as the woman I wot.  
She's one o' the kind that studies o' nights,  
To sell out her friends with all sorts of bites--  
And swindle her neighbors without much regard  
To the feelings of sinners or fear of the Lord.  
I've studied her case, and almost agreed  
That the tale of old Calvin, about the two-seed,  
Is orthodox doctrine and ought to be taught,  
She's proven so clearly she's the devil's own sort.  
On her double-gear'd tongue that flippantly wags,  
The truth never starts and the lie never lags--  
Deep versed in black mailing and calumny's]lore,  
She can blast any name not tarnished before.

She makes up her lies by system and rule,  
And tells with the "cheek" of a government mule,  
She'd "clean out" the heathen that busted Bill Nye,  
And teach the celestial how costly to try  
The tricks of old China with a Mollie McGuire—  
'Till he'd empty his sleeve and gladly retire.  
If she had half the chance, her steals would exceed  
The monstrous grabs of the greedy Boss Tweed—  
The stock gamblers of Wall Street would ruefully  
find,  
They never could count on the turn of her mind;  
She'd always make "corners," run "bulls" or  
"bears,"  
And never forget to pocket the shares.  
When her sands are run out she'll give us a rest,  
And "tumble to the racket" of Satan's behest;  
But if ever she reaches the home of the lost,  
She'll teach old Harry something to his cost,  
And kick up more rows than Satan can quell,  
And be an eye-sore to that solemn old swell.

## TO MY WIFE.

When the meshes of traitors lie thick o'er my path.  
And the fates are in fury and dealing in wrath.  
And sickness distempered seems friendless my way,  
And the clouds of misfortune admit not a ray,  
'Tis then that I turn me in joy of heart,  
And cherish the love that shall never depart:  
'Tis the bright star that guides to the wanderer  
                    given—

The purest and brightest—the best gift of heaven.  
Oh, could I redeem thee from the thralls of the  
                    poor.

And drive off the clouds that darklingly lower.  
And give thee the sphere thy virtues would grace.  
And bring back the smiles that lived on thy face,  
Golconda's bright jewels to me they'd outshine.  
For thy love is more precious than the wealth of  
                    the mine.

When the wolves of the church and the dogs of the  
                    law

Have dissected my motives to pick out a flaw,  
And traitors have banded and friends have betrayed.  
And gossip re-echoed the lie she had made,  
Thou knewest too well the lines of my life,

And I still found amends in the love of my wife.  
My arm shall yet win 'gainst a treacherous world,  
And broke and forgotten the darts it has hurled,  
And truth shall yet shine immortally bright  
And calumnies vanish like mists of the night.  
My arm shall yet win in the battle of life,  
And favor and honor shall smile on my wife,  
For the pledges I've made are truer than steel,  
And the worms shall yet writhe 'neath the grind of  
                    my heel,  
And felons shall know that a Perry's free brow  
Ne'er quailed before man--won't cringe to them  
                    now ;  
But the love I bear thee is stronger than hate,  
And prouder, and nobler, and deathless as Fate.

## TO MY INFANT DAUGHTER.

Oh, thou little cooing, guileless dove—  
Precious darling, child of love—  
Had I a pen from seraph's wing  
I'd try thy graces now to sing ;  
But this dull point of uninspired steel  
Can ill portray how much the heart can feel,  
Nor paint the hues, nor draw the lines aright  
Of all that wins the heart or glads the sight.  
Oh, who has not felt how useless, vain to try  
To reproduce the smile of one soft eye,  
Or beauty's thousand nameless lines to trace  
And make them glow upon a pictured face ?  
No poet's pen nor limner paints the ray  
That lives upon thy features, May ;  
For heaven blended all that's best  
To set such daubers long to rest ;  
For the silken floss of thy eider curls  
Would dim the gloss of the brightest pearls,  
And the smiles that live along thy brow  
Like sunbeams tracing over snow,  
Fling gladness, love and mirth around—  
For in thy heart all these abound,  
For the light that lives in thy peerless eye  
Was brought from that beyond the sky,  
Where thou wert sent from the realms of bliss  
To see the treacherous mists of this ;

But heaven lent thee more sweet grace,  
A happier heart and brighter face,  
A mien more lovely, brow more fair  
Than child of mortals often wear.  
The belle that walks the ball room's pride,  
Or decked and dizen'd monarch's bride,  
With all that fashion brings to grace  
Or guild the form, improve the face,  
Would pale before thy brighter eyes,  
That beam with light of other skies,  
For thy soft cheek and dimpled chin,  
And brow unclouded yet by sin,  
And azure eye and ruby lips,  
Would fashion's votaries all eclipse.  
But long before thou comest to know  
The hollowness of much below.  
This hand may have mingled with the dust.  
But keep this counsel long in trust:  
Such talisman man will serve the best,  
And bring thee peace and give thee rest,  
Shrinks not to raise aloft thine eye.  
Thou'lt see a guiding star on high—  
A deathless, brilliant beacon-light—  
To guide thy wondering steps aright,  
But never raise the cowering eye  
Of superstition to the sky.  
For the God that hears thy prayer above  
Is a God of truth and rules in love.  
Before thy young, unpracticed eye  
A thousand paths will tempting lie—  
A thousand flowery lawns invite,  
And glow before thy 'raptured sight;

But learn this lesson well before  
Error holds thee in her power :  
All is not good that looks divine :  
Much gold has never seen the mine,  
And jewels that gleam and shine as bright  
To counterfeit the diamond's light  
Are worthless baubles fashion wears,  
As full of stains as wanton's tears,  
To daze the weak, the vain allure—  
To wreck the thoughtless, pain the pure.  
Look not on life with sorrow's eyes,  
Because earth's not a paradise.  
The bad will ne'er outweigh the good,  
And spirits of thy happy mood  
Will find along life's sunny shores  
Luscious fruits and gaudy flowers.  
And gleams of light from the worlds of bliss  
To drive the shadows far from this.  
And if seraphs above guard sisters below,  
Light be the sorrows thy spirit shall know :  
Far from thy lot be trouble and pain—  
Bright be thy life till they call thee again.

## FROM FORT GRIFFIN TO SILVER LAKE.

It has been snowing at intervals for two or three days, and the heavy lowering clouds hang black and low over highland and valley. The biting norwester sweeps down like a hurricane from the high frozen table lands and pierces the form like daggers of ice. The few tall, bare cottonwoods and hackberries that grow along the margin of the Clear Fork are heavy with snow and frozen to their centres. Over there in a swag, standing with her moccasined feet and ankles deep in the snow, is a rimed and wrinkled Tonkawa squaw, hacking with her hatchet the withered branches of a fallen tree. The ice king has wrapped her smoky tepa in his frozen meshes, and she must add fuel to her smouldering embers or freeze.

Her pinched and withered features tell of hardship and age and suffering and want. But her piercing black eye, while it seems melancholy and sad, quails not before the storm; it has the fixed animal defiance of the hawk or she wolf, and would not quail before the King of Terrors. It has gazed on scenes of blood without a quiver, and on death without a tear of regret. Her attenuated, half-covered form possesses almost as much power of resistance as the wild animal. She knows nothing



of comfort, and Nature has kindly adapted her dark untaught daughter to live in the elements. Reeling down yonder slope comes her son, his flaring red blanket thrown loosely over his form and flapping in the wind as though he was not fanned enough. But his soul is fired and his blood is hot with the whisky that the gentlemanly agent has kindly sold him at two dollars a quart. He knows nothing of the cutting snow-drift that the storm dashes in his face as if to cool his heated brain. He is crooning the harsh, unmusical notes of the old war songs of his fathers, in his own unknown tongue, and thinking, if he thinks at all, of hunt, and chase, and war-path and scalp.

We rake away the eight or ten inches of snow that covers the earth and build a fire to thaw and warm the ground for a place to sleep. When sufficiently dry we remove the fire and spread down our buffalo robes and blankets, and rolling several logs together we build a rousing fire near the foot. Then when we get thawed out ourselves, I and my two little boys, with a buffalo robe over our feet and another over our heads, the two lapped in the middle, lie as cozily and sleep as soundly as any merchant prince wrapped in his downy comforts 'neath his roof of state. But during all that night the storm has howled and roared, and the snow has come in eddying whirls or driving drifts, as if the heavens were a solid snow-cloud.

We rose next morning from our snow-covered bed (carefully laying back the top covering to prevent the snow from finding its way into our nest)

to spend another day and night like the past. My mules and horses were shivering and eating corn with unsatisfied appetite day and night, and one load of corn was fast melting away. On the following morning (the 1st day of January) it had ceased snowing, and though it was colder than before, I determined to strike out over the highlands for the plains. Here is the outside postoffice—the limit of civilization. The mail rider goes no further. I must write to my wife. To prevent her from being uneasy I write: "We are comfortable—you cannot freeze a man to death in camp;" and while I am penning the lines, but unknown to me, carpenters are busy with plane and saw on the coffin of one who lies stark and stiff—frozen to death within a few hundred yards of my camp! A stranger had driven his wagon down into the open unsheltered valley of the Clear Fork, and too much benumbed with the cold to build a fire, he had fallen asleep in his wagon, and while dreaming of the cozy comforts of home his spirit had passed off on the storm, and the time of winter and the froth of death lay white on his lips. Strangers' hands fashioned his coffin and strangers carved out his resting place in the frozen earth. That night we camped on the highlands seventeen miles west of Ft. Griffin, and found snow birds and quails frozen to death round our camp. Next day the sun shone out bright and clear, and we hove in sight of Ft. Phantom Hill. Before the war here was a military post, but nothing now remains but the arched-top stone magazine, a few broken walls and the grey

stone chimneys. Silent all as the grave! No morning gun, or loud reveille of drum, or note of fife, or song of revelry breaks now its dead silence. The old magazine looks like an ancient mausoleum of buried greatness and the hoar chimneys like petrified giant sentinels guarding the hill where once waved the banner of liberty. But that proud banner was once humiliated, for when the tocsin of war sounded in the East the winds bore the clarion notes to the Far West, the grand old flag was hauled down, and after years of war, grimed with the smoke of many battles and riddled with bullets, was again mounted on the battlements of Griffin, to again triumphantly

“wave  
O’er the land of the free  
And the home of the brave.”

I stood on the grass plat where the proud soldier had stood in dress parade, or marched to note of fife or roll of drum, and noted the rapid changes in the whirl of time. He comes to bathe no more in the limpid river that flows so near the scene; his feet treads no more the worn path to the cool spring; they have gone to dust on the fields of Spottsylvania, the Wilderness or Chickamauga, and their elements have united with others to form the beautiful daisy or fragrant wild rose that springs from the ground once watered with his blood. The bat builds in his fireless chimneys, and the wolf claims its antre where the soldier once lay and dreamed his dreams of home. And these insen-

tient piles tell it all more eloquently than tongue of orator or pen of poet.

Now we are on the McKenzie trail, slowly winding up the Double Mountain Fork over the flats, through the gorges and canons, on the self same track followed so often by the wily Comanche when fleeing west with his body of stolen horses and weeping captives. But once on this trail followed the invincible McKenzie, who pushed them so vigorously that he bagged them in their own fastnesses, and it is said disarmed them and took seventeen hundred head of horses from them at one time.

And here and there are seen hasty breastworks thrown up when the Indians made a stand, and there are seen lines of cartridge shells where they skirmished on the open ground.

On and on we follow to the Head Waters. This is not the source of the Double Mountain Fork, but was so named under the false impression that it was. It is where the water first flows in that long, tortuous, unexplored canon in the west bluff of which the Yellow Houses are situated, and which undoubtedly was once the bed of a noble river. The ceaseless winds and blazing suns of summer have licked up its fountains centuries ago and in places have almost filled its channel. In other places it is broad and deep enough to carry the waters of the Ohio or Missouri. These Head Waters have been the theater of many conflicts. In the canon just below I picked up the skull of an Indian woman that had probably fallen beside her lord. A half mile above are the most perfectly arranged and

best chosen earth works I have ever seen. Tens of thousands of buffalo have slaked their thirst here, and many a hunter and Indian and Mexican have rode long with swollen tongues to reach its unfailing waters.

Here we take the "Trail to Mexico," level and smooth as the best McAdamized highway that leads to any of the great commercial marts of the busy East. Nature has here graded and laid down for the buckskinned hunter as fine a drive as kid-gloved aristocracy ever enjoyed in finest park. The track was first marked double by the pony that the Indian rode making one and the end of his lodge-pole dragging on the ground the other. Then the Mexican came along, and his pack horse followed one and his saddle horse the other. It was left to the tireless, unsatisfied, roving hunter to drive the first wagon—harbinger of approaching civilization—over its long hunt for sunset.

It leads away over the illimitable lawn, on a stretch of forty miles, without water. But the swift-footed, far-sighted antelope that grazes on these high divides seems as careless of that as if water was in no way essential to his being; and he certainly is satisfied to do for long intervals without it. And though untaught in the art of gunning or civil engineering, he can calculate with considerable accuracy the range of your gun.

The day was warm, and in order that our jaded teams might suffer less for water we drove over a considerable part of the route in the night. About 10 o'clock in the morning the western wall of the

canon containing the "Yellow Houses" burst upon our view. The bright morning sun was directing his rays fairly upon it, and although we were miles away the atmosphere was so pure and transparent that every interlineation on its face became distinctly visible. The round openings of the line of caverns, that have been cut by man or fashioned by nature, in the rock that forms its brow, looked no larger than cannon's mouths; but as we approached they grew larger and larger till we looked down into the canon on the saline waters and glistening sands of Lake Spirito. We drove down the descent and across the canon's bed to the springs that flow from the base of its western bluff. Here we found several hunters who had come here to find better hunting of the fast-fading buffalo. But the doomed herds had left their bones on the slopes and flats of the eastern plains, where they had melted like snow under the heavy guns of the hunters and but few had lived to wander so far. Like the Indian they have vanished from earth as the restless white man has driven them towards the arid occident. Two weeks before a party of Mexicans had made a night descent on the hunters and had stolen their horses. Their situation was desperate, and they had walked to the Pecos river (175 miles) and back in the fruitless attempt to recover them. Now they were almost out of rations and their wagon tires were dropping off in the sun. But no blues or melancholy here. Some of them were wearing a peculiar kind of octic or moccasin that attracted my attention. The hind leg of the buffalo is cut

above and below the mid 'le joint, the hide is peeled off, slightly dressed and turned. placing the fur inside. It is hauled on wet, and having the heel almost in proper form naturally, it at once assumes the shape of the foot; the natural shrinkage of the rawhide closes up the toe, and the hunter is shod. My readers may smile, but this is no slouch of a shoe where no others are to be had. But this kind of shoe has been the cause of much uneasiness and trouble among nervous persons and those given to looking out for Indian sign, as the impression made by it is wonderfully like the track of the true moccasin, and the tracks of a few hunters round a lake or spring have made the country "alive with Indians." And as the hunters like to have the country as much as possible to themselves, these tracks, spear-heads and "manufactured" arrows are sometimes found. The ruse usually has the desired effect, and parties have been known to make first rate time getting out of the country. But those poor devils cooking dinner down yonder at the spring won't make good time getting out of the country.

A three-cornered game this—between hunter and Indian and Mexican.

But these buffalo-shod, wolf-capped, long-haired, kind-hearted Dare-Devil Dicks won't come out second best.

And come out they will "*all the same*," as they say. For let the cards come as they will, their stolid equanimity is never disturbed, and it is "*all the same*" to them.

We have climbed the steep ascent to top of the bluff, and find on its brow the remains of an old stone fort. This has been pulled down by some succeeding occupant and a smaller one built inside the limits of the old, which in its turn has been thrown down by the hunters and the stones piled into a pyramid. From the top of this the hunter can scan the country for miles around and watch the movements of the straggling herds of buffalo, the maneuvers of Indian parties, or the approach of friends. But the singular caves in the cap-stone of the bluff, immediately under the site of the old fort, chiefly engage our attention, for these in connection with the fort make one of the most impregnable strongholds as against small arms I have ever seen. They are much in the shape of hollow cones, with the bases looking out over the deep valley below. And many strange, weird scenes have they looked upon. If these concave walls could talk, what startling stories they could tell, for they have been for ages alternately the shelter of nomadic tribes, the antres of the cougar and Mexican lion, the stronghold of the savage on the war path, the retreat of Mexican banditti, and once the charnel-house of a number of Indian families; and now the buffalo hunter is taking his turn. Tradition says that several Indian families living here were inoculated by accident, or design of some remorseless fiend, with that terrible, loathsome scourge of civilization, the small-pox. They knew nothing of its terrible character, but supposed it was a visitation of the wrath of the Great Spirit. It yielded not to



the incantations of the "medicine man;" every one was stricken, and every one fell before the insatiable destroyer. Snarling wolves had dragged out the bones long since, and I found nothing to tell of them but a few beads in the dust of the floor. The tomb of one I found, on a high point, perhaps the first to fall, and the only one buried. Out of the festering soil had sprung a gnarled and stunted hackberry—the only tree growing on the highlands within a hundred miles. From its root in the center of the grave, grew a thick but many-spiraled grapevine, that clung to the tree as if it knew it was the only company on the desolate plains. And when the wonderful mirage has vanished with the resplendent rays of the setting sun, and the red light has faded into the gloaming—when the jaguar quits his lair and the lank wolf gives his long note to the wind—then perches the plain owl over the Indian's lone grave and gives voice to the saddest and most melancholy requiem that bird ever sang or man ever heard. I have stood on the Desert, alone under the canopy of night, far from camp, and listened to the long unearthly wails as they floated to my ear on the soft night-wind, and almost believed that they were the utterances of wandering wraiths, vainly calling for those whose feet had trod other paths of death. But the dust of these dead nations, that sometimes floats on the desert gale and sometimes mingles with the snow, is as dead and spiritless as the volcanic ashes that lie deep over Herculaneum or the sands that sweep round the bases of the Pyramids. But I must leave the

scene. There is no game here to tempt my stay and with my heavy gun across my saddle bow I mount my good brown mare and ride out alone toward the borders of New Mexico to prospect the country. After riding seven miles along the dirt and unfrequented track I come in sight of Silver Lake, its crystal waters and salt-encrusted sands glistening with a silver-like sheen in the sun. I approached the shores of the beautiful, desolate lake, and found not far from its margin holes in the turf two or three feet deep, filled with pure living water. But silence reigned around--no living form was to be seen on the far-stretching highlands. Sometimes the long-bottomed antelope, or lank cougar, or tireless wolf will come to slake his thirst. Not often has the stillness of its long Sabbath been broken. Once a party of cavalry from far-off Griffin, tireless and keen as sleuth-hounds, had followed and overtaken here a party of murderous Comanches, and then the wild, defiant yell, the clatter of rushing cavalry and groan of dying broke its silence, and the smoke of carbine and rifle wafted murkily like a fog over its waters. But vanquished and victor were gone, and naught but the whitening skulls of the vanquished Indian remained to tell that man had warred upon its shores. I mounted to the saddle, and turned my back upon the arid, desolate West.

THE END.

POEMS AND SKETCHES  
OF

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BY  
ALONZO H. PERRY.















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